

mountain rescue

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SUMMER 2019 **69**



THE **ONLY** OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

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NEXT ISSUE

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North of Tyne and
Northumberland NP
team members during
a joint crag rescue
exercise in March
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inthisissue



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A year in the life...
#MREWDISCOVERY

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to the south west

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PAUL SMITH MREW EQUIPMENT OFFICER

REPORTING A NEAR MISS

The definition of a near miss is 'an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage, but had the potential to do so' and, according to the HSE, for every accident there are approximately 90 near misses!

Just by the nature of what a mountain rescue volunteer does, the terrain, weather and many other factors can potentially put us and others in danger.

With experience, training and good leadership we can minimise the risks but there are times when things do go wrong and this is where teams and team members need to be an open culture and report a near miss or significant incident.

By reporting a near miss or significant incident you could be instrumental in preventing a similar occurrence happening with another team and potentially save a life!

We have created an online reporting form that all teams and team members have access to. Reporting can be anonymous if required and you can access the form by requesting the link from me,

via the Facebook Equipment page and soon it will be in a new Equipment page in Moodle.

All reports will be fully investigated and reviewed by the MREW management team, and details of the report and finding will be sent out to regional reps for distribution to teams. ☺



MIKE FRANCE MREW CHAIRMAN

Can I start with a massive thank you for all your kind words, cards and social media comments made on the announcement of my award in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list, they genuinely mean a lot.

Good to hear the Adventure Smart UK launch went well in the Lakes, giving us Adventure Smart Wales and now Lake District Cumbria. Would be great for the next area to be the Peaks, I know there is some work to do here looking at how it could be funded but let's keep the momentum going with this project, we believe it will save calls for us, thus it will help in saving lives.

While reviewing our insurance this year it seems we have upset some of you by putting an upper age limit on operational members. When we make these decisions we do look into the consequences of our actions and we do take advice, if required, on our views. The decision made about insurance was nothing to do with money saving. By now you will know we have suspended that upper age limit for six months until we have taken further advice. MREW and the member teams must have a duty of care for their members. Our initial decision was based on our knowledge and a piece of research in 2014, that there is a high level of fitness required to be a team member, with the weight of MR kit and personal equipment to be carried, plus the extra time pressure put on members when going out to an incident. Fatalities to team members in recent years have been when going to the cas site on a call-out. After looking at other services, talking with some of our mountain rescue doctors and the information we had, I believe our actions about an upper age were fair, but we are now seeking more information and will come back to you with a plan.

Following the roadshows (which were a great success from our MREW viewpoint), we are finishing off a report that will be shared with you on completion. We took away a good insight into many of your concerns and have started to take action on some points already. I hope by now you can see a change with Moodle, I have been informed all minutes are now available. I am told there is now a noticeboard letting you know what's new. We are looking at our requirements for the website so we can cost a new site. We are still happy to take any comments to improve the organisation.

Thanks to the Peak District for organising this year's Princes' Charity day, along with thanks to Mid Pennine for the JD Foundation Charity day. Just a reminder that this event is a national event to support one of our main funders. I am informed some think it's just a local event to Mid Pennine. This is not the case. JD run their own charity event for children of the charities they support and this is our way of supporting them for what they do for us.

Maybe before long I can write my piece for the magazine without mentioning CIO. I understand some of you are still concerned about what we are doing, time will show our intentions were fair. Through the chairs and ops groups, you have agreed the group who will to review the applications for membership to the CIO and we will shortly be sending a pack out to start the process.

Our national conference is now not far away, I know it's another weekend away on mountain rescue activities but many of you will never have attended a MREW conference. Apart from great networking with other team members, there will be some great workshops giving you an insight into aspects of mountain rescue and for newer members it's an opportunity to talk with national officers, members from other teams and other organisations.

Please don't think the conference is just for the senior members of your team, it's for everyone. We had a few newer members attend the roadshows and everyone I spoke with after the event said they had learned a lot. So,

a bit of a plea to teams, use the conference as part of training for your newer members and help financially by supporting their place, many will gain so much knowledge about the family of MR in just one weekend. ☺



Left, top: Last year's JD Foundation Charity Day. Left: Last year's Princes' Charity Day.

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This an industry only event and NOT open to the general public. Visitors under the age of 16 will not be admitted. The organisers reserve the right to refuse entry.

Find out more at www.emergencyuk.com

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Sally Seed encourages you to consider why you and your team 'do' PR and social media and the impact of timing on your success

On the media skills course, we've always talked about considering a couple sat at home watching the local TV news and then speaking to them rather than just thinking about the interviewer or journalist. That's an important thing to do — see the audience and readership beyond the journalist — and it's as true for your own social media and any PR.

But what are you trying to achieve and how should that affect your priorities and timing?

I've come up with four core reasons to spend time on PR and social media, communicating and broadcasting to a range of people:

Fundraising — this could be promoting an event, encouraging your supporters to give to an appeal or thanking those who've supported your team. It needs to be subtle at times and more obvious at others but the more you can show how donations are spent and the value of supporting you, the better.

Safety awareness — this one needs to be done carefully as it's not about criticising casualties but should focus on promoting #BeAdventureSmart and learning lessons from incidents. Stress the positives and promote your own team's approaches to skills and training, weather awareness and equipment.

Recruitment — very few people are in touch with your team because they want to be a member themselves but there's a good chance that some will and, if not, you'll be

recruiting them as advocates for what you do regardless. It's worth using PR and social media when you're looking to recruit as it's also a great opportunity to highlight the commitment involved and your voluntary status to a wider audience.

Reputation — this is the least tangible and yet the most important of the lot really. How you speak about your call-outs, your fundraising, your supporters, your challenges and your achievements builds up a picture in people's minds about what you do and how you do it. In a media environment that's getting more and more negative, challenging and critical, it's important to invest in stressing the positives, being constructive and showing your value.

Understanding your reasons and objectives can help you decide on your priorities for posting or for press releases and I'd always recommend having a mix of posts that cover all bases over a period of time. Keep a balance of incident news and training, fundraising and spending on new gear, thanks and advice. And, as I mentioned in my Spring column, it's worth linking your stories into external events and topical dates too.

And that brings me on to timing. With scheduling of posts getting easier, it doesn't need to be especially time-consuming to make sure that your team has something current and live ahead of most weekends when people are browsing social media. And

it's likely that early evenings will be a good time to schedule posts when people are in browsing mode rather than work.

Timing is also important closer to home. Local and weekly newspapers are struggling to maintain their readerships but many of them have been great supporters of MR teams over the years. The immediacy of online news services, local and national, doesn't help a printed newspaper's circulation and readership either. If you send out a press release or post a story on Facebook on a Monday, it's going to seem like old news to a lot of people by the time it's in the local paper on Friday. Plan ahead and maybe give your local paper a heads up on the Monday but only post on your social media once the paper is published. It might not be possible for everything but at least it will help and keep that relationship with your local media as strong as possible too.

Finally, a shameless plug...

A few of us have been reviewing and updating the MREW Guidelines for Social Media and these will be online in the members' area of the website once complete. Please have a look, share with your colleagues and ensure that all your team members and key supporters, especially any new ones, are aware of their responsibilities, the implications of getting it wrong and the opportunities from doing it right. ☺

FREE SAR SEMINARS AT THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW 18-19 SEPTEMBER

Visitors to this year's Emergency Services Show can attend free CPD-accredited seminars and workshops covering a range of topics of particular interest to the search and rescue community. The free College of Paramedics workshops include a session on the identification and management of heatstroke, hypothermia and frostbite, for example. Meanwhile, SAR professional, mental health advocate and paramedic Andy Elwood is among the speakers in the Health & Wellbeing Theatre. Andy (a regular contributor to Mountain Rescue magazine) was instrumental in setting up the UKSAR National Wellbeing Group.

This year The Emergency Services Show has an exciting new addition: The SkyBound Rescuer Drone Seminar and a SkyBound Rescuer Drone Zone, to encourage drone development for emergency services through research and discussion, proudly sponsored by SOARIZON® by Thales.

Staff and volunteers from Mountain Rescue England and Wales, Lowland Rescue, the British Cave Rescue Council, NSARDA, the RNLI and UK International Voluntary Rescue Alliance will all be on hand to offer advice and expertise in the dedicated Search and Rescue Zone. Exhibiting for the first time is Drone SAR for Lost Dogs.

The Emergency Services Show takes place at the NEC, Birmingham 18-19 September. Entry to the exhibition and seminars is free, as is parking. The NEC is linked to Birmingham International Station and Birmingham Airport and is directly accessible from the UK motorway network.

ALL MOUNTAIN RESCUE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ARE INVITED TO REGISTER NOW FOR FREE ENTRY AT WWW.EMERGENCYUK.COM



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 - Abuse.
- 2. Legal Expenses Insurance**
- 3. Motor Vehicle Insurance**

The advantages of this are twofold:

- Wide and uniform cover for all teams
- Premium discounts due to 'bulk buying'.

However, it is important to understand that each individual team is responsible for its own assets. By no means exhaustive, these could include:

- Base
- General contents
- Vehicle contents – not fitted to vehicle
- Radio comms/electronic kit
- Medical kit including consumables
- Water related assets
- Miscellaneous technical equipment
- Boats/Kayaks
- Bikes
- Drones.

With regards to this, it's extremely important to maintain an accurate level of insurance cover. The best way to achieve this is to create an inventory detailing all the contents, equipment and kit you have and then place a value against each. Items that are donated or bequeathed to teams are often overlooked so it's vital that these are also included. Maintain the inventory accurately and review periodically. The bottom-line total value figure is what you need to base the insurance on. All Risks cover should be considered for equipment.

Please feel free to contact us for any advice when it comes to insurance. We are more than happy to assist, advise or provide an insurance quotation with no obligation whatsoever. Many teams have already benefited from speaking with us and made savings on their existing premiums. We have a dedicated mountain rescue email address for members to contact us with insurance questions, queries or advice: mountainrescue@integrogroupp.com. You will also find an informative Insurance Resource section on the MREW website.

The Integro team are attending the MREW conference at Leeds Beckett University 7-8 September and would be delighted to meet with mountain rescue team members and answer any questions or discuss your insurance needs.

Keeping Track
A year in the life...
#MREWDISCOVERY

ON THE HILL WITH LONGTOWN MRT... May 2019

OFF-ROAD TRAINING with Severn Area Rescue Association April 2019

AdventureSmartUK officially launched in South Wales in May with a reception at the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay, and Mark Lewis (MREW ICT officer and chairman of South Wales Mountain Rescue Association) was there to represent mountain rescue.

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Lord Elis-Thomas helped celebrate the roll out of the initiative which began in Wales with the support of funding from the Welsh Government.

'I'm delighted we were able to support this project. We all want people to enjoy the outdoors safely and by working together this project has enabled people to be adventure smart, have the information they need to be prepared and safely enjoy their time in the great outdoors.'

And, of course, it was another opportunity to show off the MREW Land Rover Discovery!

GETTING ADVENTURE SMART IN SOUTH WALES alongside other emergency services May 2019

ADVENTURE SMART UK
Cymru-Wales

April: Prince of Wales visits Langdale Ambleside base

JUDY WHITESIDE

The Prince of Wales was in Cumbria on Monday 8 April and it was an opportunity for Lake District team members – and a select handful of others – to demonstrate their skills and shake the hand of their future king.



With an itinerary which started at the Pirelli Tyres factory in Carlisle and finished up at Hawkshead Relish Company, via the Windermere Jetty Museum of Boats, Steam and Stories and the Langdale Ambleside team base, there was a lot to fit in. Time was tight. But with just forty-five minutes to play with, team leader Nick Owen and his team certainly packed it in.

Fascinating for me, invited as magazine editor, was the opportunity to join the royal rota of press, TV and radio journalists, photographers and cameramen. Normally, at any of these events, there's just a bit of surreptitious (almost apologetic) note-taking on my part, but here I was out and proud, press tag slung round a coat button, notepad and pen poised.

After an initial briefing with the Clarence

House Communications Officer, we were walked through the route the Prince would take, where we would stand and where the cameras were likely to be pointing, before doing it for real.

It was a route which expertly snaked from the Prince's meet and greet with onlookers gathered in the car park and on through the building. In and out of the Control Room, down the step to the garage ('Don't forget to tell him about the step!'), into the back yard, up some shiny new steps and back inside to the Medical Training Room. On to the Relatives' Room, then along the corridor to the Lecture Room, before doubling back along the corridor, down the stairs and out to the car. And breathe...

Bang on 13.35, the Prince arrived, met by Nick, Mark Bains (team chairman) and

Richard Warren (LDSAMRA chair). Accompanied by Nick and Mark, Charles (wearing an official MR Supporter badge), saw how technology has changed the way mountain rescue teams operate, with a speedy demonstration of the MRMap mapping software developed by Duddon and Furness team member Dave Binks, and the SARCALL incident and logging platform devised by Ogwen Valley team member John Hulse.

He also met the team's base operators, including Dave and Gareth Barrington, the only father and son in the history of the team to serve at the same time (we think) — although not in the history of the wider mountain rescue organisation. (And those with a keen eye for detail will know that the late Malcolm Grindrod served, at one time, alongside both his daughters, Joy and Kathy).

By 13.45, we were in the team's enviable drive-through garage, inspecting the vehicles and chatting to Roger Pickup with seasoned search dog Ted — surely the cleanest search dog in Cumbria on that particular Monday morning?

Five minutes later, it was out to the back yard, where a cyclist had gone too fast down a local track, impacting a boulder mid-thigh. Now here he was, courtesy of Casualties Union and some expertly-applied make-up, being treated for C-spine, chest and possible pelvic injuries, a mid-shaft femur fracture and a bloodied forehead. By the time we arrived, he was already in the vacmat with BP, SPO2 and ECG monitoring underway. Splints were in place (including the Kendrick's which I initially noted as 'Hendrick's'). No prizes for guessing my favourite tipple, and IV access in place via a cannula.

A quick natter with the casualty and the team members treating him, then it was up those shiny new steps and back inside for a demo of CPR using the Autopulse, overseen by team doctor Les Gordon. This piece of equipment enables team members and successive medical personnel to continue working on a casualty whilst CPR continues automatically — the record, we heard, being for six hours.

Then, at 14.00, accompanied by Dr Les, His Royal Highness met former soldier Justin Hale and his wife, Ruth Braithwaite, for a private chat. In December last year, Justin was out alone on Steel Fell, above Grasmere, recceing a leg of the Bob Graham Round ready to support friends in their planned attempt. He'd been out a long time, and in low cloud and, by this point, just wanted to get down and home.

On a very steep descent, he lost control in a slide and fell, only later realising he'd been knocked unconscious. Coming to, it took some time to locate himself. His only thought was to get himself down the hill but he somehow knew he couldn't stand. As he passed in and out of consciousness, over seven long hours, his dog Peggy, stayed by his side. And, needless to say, Peggy was there too, in April, to meet the Prince.

Meanwhile, Ruth arrived home from work

and, concerned he hadn't returned, rallied some pals to head up the hill to search for Justin. One of those friends heard Peggy barking and called for mountain rescue.

'They were very calm, professional,' he says. 'I knew I was in capable hands.'

Hypothermic (35.5°C), with serious injuries to his sternum, ribs and his spine fractured in two places, Justin was winched to Carlisle for a chest drain, then taken to RVI Newcastle for spinal treatment. Months on, he still has some way to go to full recovery but knows he's lucky to be alive.

With just ten minutes earmarked for meeting team members, trustees and their partners, a team fundraiser and regional officers — including everyone already involved in the various scenarios — everyone got the opportunity to shake hands and chat.

'Were we all 'mad fell runners?' asked Charles, when introduced to the group of LDSAMRA officers, which I'd joined — hastily transformed, as I scuttled across the room, from Royal Rota media person to Mountain Rescue magazine editor and MREW representative. Clearly, Justin's story had made an impression.

Finally, at 14.15, Nick offered a few words of thanks before inviting His Royal Highness to unveil a plaque, specially commissioned to commemorate his visit (and also 'celebrate fifty years of mountain rescue in Langdale Ambleside', more of which we'll have next year).

'I am full of admiration for all the work you do,' he said, adding that we were very lucky indeed in this country to have 'all these different mountain rescue teams'.

He acknowledged how hard the teams work and how dedicated they are, the difference they make to people. 'I've met one person today,' he said, 'who's told me how splendid you are,' once again referencing Justin.

And then he was off to Hawkshead. 14.20, on the button.

'It was an honour and privilege,' Nick told me later, once the dust had settled on what has been weeks of preparation. 'He recognised that mountain rescue isn't just about us but the wider mountain rescue community and the people who support us — the fundraisers and the casualties. It's not just about the people who go out on the hill.'

And with that — barely an hour after the Prince of Wales's departure — the word went out: Call out! Casualty, Pavey. Query ankle injury. And they were off. Business as usual. ☺

Opposite: Whistle-stop tour with team members, including Roger Pickup with Ted, Casualties Union actors, Mark Bains, Nick Owen, Richard Warren, Justin Hale, John Hulse, Dave Binks, Andy Caple and many more besides © Paul Burke. Royal Rota © Judy Whiteside.



May: AdventureSmartUK launches 'Lake District Cumbria'

JUDY WHITESIDE

It was early. It was cold. A stiff breeze ruffled the surface of the lake. It was doing its damndest to drizzle. And across that chilly lake from Coniston Boating Centre, the clouds clung on in places, obstinately obscuring the view, drifted here and there in others, teasing us with what lay beyond. Yet a hint of sunshine had glimmered momentarily on my drive down through the Lakes. Maybe, just maybe, by late afternoon it might get warmer. On the other hand...



Just your average Lake District Bank Holiday weekend then. In fact, some might say, just your average day in the mountains when — Beasts from the East and freakishly warm Easter breaks aside — you never quite know what you'll get. What better day to begin rolling out an outdoor safety campaign?

It was Friday 3 May and this was the official launch of #AdventureSmartUK in the Lakes. The campaign which started with #AdventureSmartWales last year, has been rebranded, the ultimate aim to roll out consistent safety messages across the whole of the UK. Go to AdventureSmartUK now and you'll see two destinations listed: 'Lake District Cumbria' and 'Wales'.

Map and compass © Graham Uney.

Paul Donovan introduced AdventureSmart to the assembled group, some of us quite a way from their home patch, like Matt Dooley, PDMRO chairman, there to see how the safety campaign might roll out across the Peak District. Also gathered in the warmth were Nick Owen (who oversaw the Lakes launch), Richard Warren and members of Coniston MRT, alongside Gill Haigh (Cumbria Tourism), Richard Leafe (Lake District National Park), Peter McCall (Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner) and Gill Cherry from Cumbria Police, and representatives from the RNLI, National Trust, Institute of Outdoor Learning and Swim England, each with a clear and vested interest in seeing this campaign work.

JD Foundation has produced new literature for their retail outlets and it's hoped that teams will consistently share the #BeAdventureSmart message far and wide. As for Mountain Rescue England and Wales, we've started as we mean to go on with an MREW blog focusing on the key messages, and a revamp of the safety leaflets (both Lakes and MREW versions), supported by Cicerone. The website has also been updated.

The message is simple. Enjoy your adventures in the outdoors, but before you set out, ask yourself three questions: Do I have the right gear? Do I know what the weather will be like? Am I confident I have the knowledge and skills for the day ahead? Wherever you're headed, whatever adventure it is you're planning, the same three questions apply. Answered yes to all three? Then off you go. Get out that door and have some fun! Not so sure? Then there's plenty of advice on the AdventureSmartUK website about what you need to carry with you and how to stay safe. ☺

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A SUPPLY OF THE NEW LEAFLET, PLEASE EMAIL ME VIA EDITOR@ MOUNTAIN.RESCUE.ORG.UK.





PAULINE RICHARDS DARTMOOR SRT ASHBURTON 1952–2019

Pauline Richards passed away after a sudden and unexpected illness. She is survived by her son James and daughter Liz, and by the members of her other family, Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team (Ashburton), writes **Craig Scollick**.

Pauline was an active member of the team for almost thirty years, as a hill member, SARDA search dog handler and committee member. In later years, she worked steadfastly to support our search managers in the control vehicle. It was while she was on duty with the team, contributing to the safety cover for the two thousand young people taking part in this year's Ten Tors Challenge, that she collapsed. We are indebted to all those who assisted us in getting Pauline from our remote position on the high moor to hospital in Plymouth. We would like to thank the Army, Royal Navy, Devon 4X4 and Dartmoor National Park Rangers, all of whom made it possible for us to achieve this so swiftly.

Pauline was one of our most sociable members. She would speak to everyone, from the newest trainee to the longest serving member, always had a kind word for those who needed one and freely helped anyone who asked for her assistance. And as a woman who had in gained respect in a predominately male world, she made a point of supporting the many other women who have followed her since.

She was a dedicated and enthusiastic smoker, smoking creatively in the foulest weather and the most unlikely situations. For a period of time she had a small waterproof plastic container with two cigarettes and a lighter hung around her neck on a bit of string. The sight of her lighting up whilst standing in waist deep water, waiting for something to happen, is an image that captures a bit of her character — resourceful, practical, bold and just a little bit bloody-minded. She had a devilish sense of humour that could gently torment the unwary. Sometimes the only clue for an increasingly perplexed trainee that she was standing on the small navigation target was her quiet chuckling. This was only matched by an unerring talent for sniffing out fresh coffee. Her ability to appear at just the right time must have taken years to perfect.

We take comfort in knowing that when she fell ill, she was with friends and on Dartmoor, a place she loved. Although we didn't know it at the time, a few of us were also lucky enough to have been with her the evening before, doing what she liked most, sharing stories and having a laugh over a drink or two. At Pauline's wake, team chairman Tas Ali posthumously awarded Pauline's MREW 25 Year Long Service Award to her children. None of us realise quite how much we'll miss someone until they're gone. Pauline was always there, an ever-present part of our team. We are going to miss her commitment, humour and friendship more than we can say. ☹



Above: Tas Ali with James and Liz.



MAY: MARITIME MINISTER TAKES TO THE WATER IN BOLTON AND ANNOUNCES £1 MILLION MORE IN RESCUE BOAT GRANT FUNDS

Bolton team members were delighted to welcome Nusrat Ghani, and local MP, Chris Green, to see first-hand how the £13,118 from the Department for Transport Inshore and Inland Rescue Boat Grant Fund 2018 had been spent.

The £5M grant scheme was launched in 2014 for five years, to support charitable organisations running local lifeboat and rescue boat services on and around the UK's inland and inshore waterways. Bolton MRT has received over £40,000 to date, enabling the purchase of replacement rescue equipment, a new boat engine and throw lines for all members.

'The water team is an integral part of our search and rescue capabilities, having already provided support during major flooding incidents in Prestolee, Salford, Lancaster and Scarborough,' says Martin Banks, the team's treasurer. 'We were delighted to welcome Ms Ghani and take the opportunity not just to showcase Bolton, but to represent mountain rescue in general.'

The visit began with a tour of the team's base at Ladybridge Hall, where Ms Ghani was introduced to team members and given an overview of the team's activities. Chris Green brought his own perspective, having previously been part of a team training night. The visitors were later taken to a local reservoir to see the team

in action, aided and abetted by their 'new' water dummy (courtesy of the fund) and a practice of the 'person overboard drill'. After the demonstrations, Ms Ghani announced an extension of £1 million of additional funding for 2019/20.

'I was delighted to see first-hand the fantastic work the Rescue Boat Grant Fund helps support. This is a cause close to my heart and one I know has a significant impact on the ground. That's why I have prioritised a further £1 million to continue the fund for another year. I will be opening this year's funding competition during Maritime Safety Week (1-5 July). I hope that everybody will be able to get behind the week, which is designed to highlight the amazing work the sector does to ensure safety on and around water on a daily basis.'

Above: Left to right: Chris Greenalgh (Deputy Team Leader), Nusrat Ghani MP (Maritime Minister), Chris Green MP, Steve Fletcher (BMRT Team Leader) © The Bolton News.



JUNE: NORTH EAST TEAMS COMPLETE BLUE LIGHT TRAINING

Twenty three team members from Northumberland National Park (NNPMRT) and North of Tyne teams completed their Response Driver Training with Northumbria Police in June.

Training was organised by deputy operations lead for the NNPMRT, Russell Emmerson, with officers from the Northumbria Police Driver Response Training Unit delivering theory and practical training sessions before taking out team members for their 'test'.

For Northumberland team member, Will Close-Ash, it was his first time attending the course. 'I was pretty nervous about driving with blue lights on and a police officer right next to me. But, once we settled into it, it was just like any other drive. Well, almost! I was surprised at how great other drivers were at assisting our progress when the lights were on.'

Both teams would like to thank the officers from the Northumbria Police Driver Response Training Unit and their own team members for giving up their time to complete the course.

Top: MR member Sue Mitchell upon successfully completing her rapid response training with instructors from Northumbria Police © NNPMRT.



MARCH: KIRKBY STEPHEN TEAM MEMBERS CELEBRATE FIFTY YEARS AND LAUNCH NEW BASE RESILIENCE PROJECT

The celebrations and launch took place at Tebay Services Hotel with around sixty guests gathered, including 25 current team members, around 20 former team members and representatives from the police, fire service, town and county councils, local businesses and charities, and LDSAMRA.

Guests included Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Peter McCall, Phil Dew (County Council), Joan Johnstone (Town Council), Richard Warren (LDSAMRA) and Heb Lumley, one of the team's founder members. Presentations were made by the current team chairman Arthur Littlefair, team leader Adrian Cottrell and treasurer Peter Miller.

Guests were reminded of the long history of the team, from the time when rescuers responded in their own vehicles and kit, with just two radios that filled a rucksack each. The team was one of the first to have a purpose-built base, around 25 years ago and, unusually, has had only three team leaders, with both Peter Day and Arthur Littlefair serving some 23 years each. During its existence there have been around 190 volunteer members.

The team already benefits from good training and control facilities and garaging for three vehicles but the three-stage Base Resilience Project is set to enhance that provision. The first phase — to improve member welfare and install gas central heating — has already started, thanks to donations received and funding secured. Other key elements of the £40K project include a diesel generator to enable continuation of all the services in case of power failure, Uninterrupted Power Supplies for key computers and servers, extension of the current kitchen to house a freezer, fridge and cooking facilities and the conversion of an upstairs room to a multi-purpose facility.

TEAM TALK SPRING

MAY: PATERDALE BOOK LONG-LISTED FOR LAKELAND BOOK OF THE YEAR

Sales of Angela Bell's *You Just Can't Bottle It*, about her years of fell walking, have so far raised £1300 for the Patterdale team.

As a trustee, Angela is very aware of the costs of running the team and the demands on funds to keep equipment up to date. And it's truly a Lake District affair, with a foreword by Joss Naylor, design by team member, Dave Freeborn and cover photo taken by Ian Allington.

'The book is about fellwalking through generations of my family,' says Angela, 'with tales from my time in mountain rescue and my adventures with a variety of companions. The title came about because you have to go up into the mountains to experience the atmosphere — you can't just buy that feeling in a bottle!'

Recently, Angela took part in a signing event in Glenridding, hosted by Catstycam. Copies of *You Just Can't Bottle It* are available from Angela at angela_bell65@aol.com with PayPal payment or from Catstycam in Glenridding. It costs £10 plus postage and packing.

Right: Patterdale trustee Angela Bell in Glenridding with the team Land Rover. Inset: Front Cover of *You Just Can't Bottle It* © Patterdale MRT.



Left: Kirkby Stephen 50 Years © KSMRT.

SARLOC Version 2

RUSS HORE

The SARLOC™ technology for locating lost people using their mobile phone and web browser, has been in operational use via the SMS/web interface since its innovation back 2009. Now rolled out around the world, it is in use by emergency services from as far afield as Hong Kong to the ski patrols of the USA and many UK-based emergency services.

Many copies have been made (I have been told imitation is the best form of flattery), some of them even attributing where they took their idea from.

Unfortunately, SARLOC and all the copies suffer from the same problem. If the lost person's 'phone doesn't have a data signal, they cannot download the SARLOC web page to obtain their location from the phone and obviously cannot share that location directly with emergency services.

When I developed SARLOC, I made the decision not to write a real 'app', as this would mean the LostPer would either need to have it pre-installed or download it once they called for help, neither of which could be guaranteed. Also, any 'app' would be platform-dependant and would mean developing for multiple types of phone (Apple, Android etc).

SARLOC is now ten years old and, although I've been told it has been a 'game-changer' for the emergency services, many teams have attempted to provide a solution to the LostPer not having a data signal by advocating they install apps such as OSLocate, which will give a grid reference without requiring a data signal.

SARLOC Version 2 (SV2) has been developed to provide the best of both worlds by showing the LostPer a grid reference without requiring a data signal, but also allowing them to share the location with emergency services if they do have a data signal. Also, once the app has been installed and started — during which time the user will be prompted to allow access to the GPS on the phone — it is almost guaranteed to work when they need it.

SV2 works anywhere in the world, giving a grid reference relative to where the user is located ie. OS Grid in the UK, OSI Grid in Ireland or UTM elsewhere in the world. This is all implemented without requiring the user to have a data signal or connection to the internet.

If the LostPer is in voice communication with the emergency services, they can obviously read out their location, although there could be translation issues, poor voice communications and so forth. If they want to share their location directly with the SARLOC infrastructure, they will be given a SARKey by the emergency services. A SARKey is a short sequence of characters

that the LostPer enters into SV2 which temporarily enables sharing of their location. The SARKey is similar to the 'token system' I developed for the original version of SARLOC and allows the emergency service to disable sharing of a location once the LostPer is a FoundPer — which prevents FoundPers sitting in the pub showing their mates how SARLOC found them and adding locations to the SARLOC systems.

Once the SARKey has been disabled, the user can still see their location in the SV2 'app' but cannot add it to SARLOC systems.

Another innovation is the ability to translate into a number of languages. If the LostPer is, for example, French and has their phone set to use that as the display language, all SARLOC prompts will be in French, making it easier for them to understand what they need to do in a stressful situation. Currently, the app is translated into German, French, Welsh, Polish and Swedish.

How it works

The first time SV2 is started after installation, the user will be asked if SV2 is allowed to access their location. Once they have allowed this access, if they need to use SV2 in an emergency, it will show them their location.

SV2 is currently a single screen app, as shown here. The app calculates where in



the world the user is located and if they are on the UK mainland, the grid reference will be shown as a ten-figure OSGB reference. In Ireland, the grid will be shown as a ten figure OSI reference. Elsewhere, as shown in the third screenshot of Sydney, Australia, the grid will be UTM. The Lat/Long will also be relevant to where the person is located.

Prior to release of SV2, teams have been briefed on how to obtain a SARKey.

SARLOC Version 2 is available from the Apple store, cost £1.99. An Android version in development. 📱



KESTREL SHOWCASE RANGE AT ESS 2019

RPR Ltd will be showcasing the complete range of Kestrel Instruments at the Emergency Services Show on stand N40.

Used extensively by emergency services personnel delivering highly accurate instantaneous environmental data, helping to quickly and accurately assess the conditions wherever they are working, monitoring the local weather conditions, predicted weather conditions and information to assess exposure and heat stress. This information is vital for ground crews and rescue helicopters to deliver fast and save evacuations.

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MAY: 45 YEARS AND COUNTING IN BOWLAND

Two stalwarts of Bowland Pennine MRT, Ian Ordish and Paul Durham, have each notched up 45 years in mountain rescue having joined in 1974.

Although they've both served the team in various roles they have prodigious fundraising and casualty care expertise in common. Both continue to be active members, bringing their wealth of knowledge and experience to training and call-outs.

Above: Ian Ordish (left) and Paul Durham with their certificates © Bowland Pennine MRT.



TEAM TALK SPRING

FEBRUARY: OLD FRIEND LEAVES TEESDALE AND WEARDALE

It's always sad saying goodbye to an old friend, especially one who's never let you down. Teesdale and Weardale bade farewell to just such a friend in late February when their Land Rover – 'Stan's Van', named after a former team member – served 'his' last operational day.

Stan's Van joined the team in December 2003 and, since then, he's attended nearly every call-out, in all weather conditions, never complaining, just kept on going. 'The only time he was heard to whine', writes the team's press officer Mike Needham, 'was when one team member tried to give him a mud bath in a peat bog up on the fells of County Durham. He's served us well over 60,000 miles. Like all Land Rovers, he had his charms and foibles, such as off-set steering, vibration you could feel through your bum and ventilation that comes through all parts of the vehicle. But most of all we loved the traction of 4x4 wheel drive'.

It's taken just over fifteen years to fundraise for a replacement vehicle but 'Teesdale Mobile 1' is now operational, its role to transport team members to different locations during a search, drop equipment off and, if needed, to transport a casualty to another ambulance.

'We invested considerable time to ensure we got a quality vehicle, optimised for team working and this Isuzu D Max 4x4 pick-up is fitted with a high-level rear canopy, emergency lighting and sirens, front winch, tow bar, underbody guards, front and side spot lights, and a bespoke internal racking system for carrying team equipment. We hope it will serve us for many years as it has big boots to fill!

'We found a lot of manufacturers are offering pick-ups designed for the leisure market. As we were after a workhorse, our options were limited. For those with an eye to detail, we opted for an Isuzu D-Max pick-up capable of carrying five people, fitted with Gull Wing hard top, bed liner, satnav and phone mount, Bluetooth radio mic, aluminium transmission guards, cab roof rack fitted with spotlight at the front and sides, livery to mountain rescue specification, all-terrain BFG tyre, tow bar with 13-pin plug, warn winch fitted with Dyneema rope a log with a recovery kit, rubber floor mat and waterproof seat covers, internal racking and storage system, emergency lighting system with sirens, Shoreline connection and battery charger, fire extinguisher, roof-mounted central console to hold two radios.

'We'd like to thank Bescol Motors (Isuzu dealer), Derwent Vinyls (livery), D Oliver's Auto Electrics (auto electrics) and Hiatco Ltd (internal racking and storage) for their efforts to ensure we were supplied with a quality pick-up, exceeding our expectations. We appreciate the work they did free of charge to ensure our vision was achieved.'

Top: Stan's Van. Right: Teesdale Mobile 1 © TWSMRT.



MARCH: BIG SPRING CLEAN UP IN THE CALDER VALLEY

On support of Calderdale Council's annual Big Spring Clean, Calder Valley team members and supporters took part in the clean-up of an illegal fly-tipping hotspot.

The site, clearly visible from Brighouse town centre, has long been a blight on the local landscape. Technical rope and water safety skills were used to protect team members as they cleared the steep area above the river of an array of fly-tipped items ranging from settees to gnomes! Four hours and three full wagons of cleared material later, the area was transformed back to its natural litter free state.

Left: Happy workers! Left to right, Howard Barton, Richard Quinn and Nic Bartlett. Abandoned gnome © CVSRT.

conference 2019

Photo © Sara Spillett

at Leeds Beckett University 7-8 September 2019

The aim is to bring mountain rescue and the wider search and rescue community together to review, reflect and identify opportunities and challenges for the future, and to build even closer working relationships. **Julian Walden** gives a brief overview of the programme, speakers, sponsors and exhibitors.

The programme comprises a number of themed tracks, including Medical and Governance. Other tracks have yet to be determined but will include a wide range of subjects taken from suggestions put forward by those team members who pre-registered their interest in attending. These will include sessions on Search Management, App and Software Development, DEFRA Concept of Operations, Wellbeing, Training, Rope Rescue Guidelines and many other topics. We are aiming to keep it as current and fresh as possible. This overview is by no means comprehensive — as I write, we continue to add both speakers and exhibitors. As speakers are confirmed, we will announce them, so delegates can start to think about the sessions they would like to attend ahead of the weekend.

A Saturday evening dinner and bar is included in the delegate fee — a great opportunity for some informal networking after the first day of the conference. Dress code is casual. Our after-dinner speaker is Dave Bunting MBE who will be talking on leading in challenging situations. It promises to be a great weekend so be sure to book your place!

Exhibitors

(confirmed to date)

KEELA
SIMOCO
BLIZZARD
ARMADILLO MERINO
THE OUTDOORS COMPANY
ECLIPSE CLIMBING LTD
LYON EQUIPMENT
HELIX TACTICAL LTD
R3 SAR GEAR/ROCK EXOTICA
PARAMO
SAFEQUIP
LEDSCO
DANAH
THE PHOTON SHOP
AMANZI SAFETY & RESCUE

Speakers *

(confirmed to date)

INSPECTOR PHIL BRADLEY NATIONAL POLICE SEARCH CENTRE

Phil sits on the board for Police Search Governance, alongside other working groups. He led the Lost and Missing Person Search Framework process in 2017 and, more recently, contributed to the DEFRA-led concept of operations for flood rescue.

SERGEANT GARY FRETWELL NATIONAL POLICE SEARCH CENTRE

Gary's experience in search is wide and varied, from protecting some of our most prominent high profile individuals and events, to search management of crime scenes of all types, whilst also supporting missing people enquiries. This particular area of expertise has taken him the length and breadth of the UK as well as overseas.

* Please note, this is NOT a comprehensive list of all speakers, just a flavour of what we have to date

DAVID BURROWS-SUTCLIFFE LEGAL AWARENESS IN DOCUMENTATION

As a lawyer David has specialised in high profile major incident cases including the Princess Diana Inquest/Public inquiry, the 7/7 London Bombings, Ladbroke Grove and the Clapham Rail Disaster.

JASON MALLINSON RESCUE FROM THAILAND'S THAM LUANG CAVE

Jason is an exploration and rescue cave diver, who most recently helped plan and carry out the rescue of the Wild Boar football team from a flooded cave in Thailand. His previous exploits have set distance and depth records in caves all over the world, from the deep jungle caves of Mexico (Huautla and Cheve systems) to the vast dive distances of the Pozo Azul system in northern Spain.

NEIL SINCLAIR DIGITAL SECURITY

Neil is national cyber lead for the Police Digital Security Centre, a not-for-profit organisation established by the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime in 2015 to support small and medium-sized businesses improve their cyber security. In 2018, the organisation was taken over by Police Crime Prevention Initiatives (PCPI) Limited, owners of the police-backed Secured By Design scheme.

DR MATT WILKES INJURIES IN CANOPY SPORTS AND RESCUE

As a paraglider pilot and skydiver himself, Matt is passionate about canopy sports. In 2016, he founded the Free Flight Physiology Project to improve pilot safety and performance and has since written and delivered trauma courses to paraglider pilots and base jumpers internationally, while conducting scientific studies into aspects of paragliding pilot physiology and performance as part of a PhD programme.

DR LOEL COLLINS TRAINING FOR COMPETENCY IN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Loel is a senior lecturer in the Institute of Coaching and Performance at the University of Central Lancashire, having joined the institute after a thirty year career working in the outdoor sector as a coach and guide.

DR JOHN ELLERTON SUSPENSION SYNDROME

John is a member of Patterdale MRT, was MREW Medical Officer (2002-2012) and editor of Casualty Care in Mountain Rescue 2000 and 2006. He joined ICAR MedCom in 2002, joined the ICAR Executive Board in 2012 as an assessor, and became ICAR MedCom president in 2017. He has co-authored over 30 articles in peer-reviewed journals.

ANDREW HAMILTON UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS SECTOR LEAD CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

Andrew is Unmanned Aircraft Systems sector lead at the Civil Aviation Authority. As a retired police officer, he's had lots of dealings with the various search and rescue organisations and other emergency services. He also set up the first police drone unit in Devon and Cornwall Police before joining the CAA.

CHRIS JONES RISK SERVICES MANAGER & SPORT BROKER

Chris retired from the police service in May 2010 having served 30 years. He planned and managed large-scale searches for missing persons and bodies, offensive searches to recover evidence at major crime scenes and defensive searches to protect VIPs. He also holds a position as an associate consultant at the Emergency Planning College (Cabinet Office) in the UK where he lectures on Spectator Safety and Event Risk Management.

After dinner speaker



DAVE BUNTING MBE LEADING IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Dave is a highly skilled expedition leader with over 30 years experience of climbing in the mountains, including some of the highest in the world. He has a wealth of experience in leading large groups on a variety of expeditions — including the first British team to climb the formidable and rarely attempted West Ridge of Mount Everest in 2006, which earned him an MBE — and, through this, he has developed a strong understanding of what it takes to lead in challenging situations, from first time novices to high performing teams.

If you still haven't booked your place, you have until 31 July. Just go to mrew-conference.co.uk and click on Book Now.

If you are a member of a mountain rescue team or a volunteer search and rescue team ask your team leader, chair or secretary for your discount code or email admin@mrew-conference.co.uk using your team/organisation email address so we can verify you.

In association with Integro Entertainment & Sport





My first official month in the job has been interesting...

...to say the least. Learning the ropes and nudging the boundaries has been seriously much tougher than that first year as a trainee. Working remotely with the exec and management teams, who meet just once monthly is interesting. Trying to get up to speed as smoothly and as rapidly as possible has been challenging but everyone has been very supportive and encouraging.

For those that aren't aware, we've not had a volunteer national fundraising officer for a few years. Mike France was in the role before taking the chair, so he's definitely watching my progress from the corner of his eye. More recently, MREW contracted a professional fundraiser, Jody Dyer, who was paid for hours worked only. Unfortunately, she was unable to continue and the arrangement ended in March. Mike had a very useful handover session with Jody and confirms that she has laid the foundation for several longer term prospects, including a fantastic opportunity from Helly Hansen. I'd like to thank her for the work she has done on our behalf and wish her well. We obviously hope to develop as many of those leads as possible as well as many more new ones.

I understand that Jody visited a number of teams during her tenure and discussed local needs and planned purchases. I haven't found any details of those meetings yet so if you have any outstanding business with her or even notes on the meetings, please contact me via fundraisingofficer@mountain.rescue.org.uk.

The scope of my role is daunting — the budgeted expenditure is far greater than imagined, and inevitably so is the target income. The categories for funding are less tangible than at team level so the notion of seeking funding for a particular item is a total non-starter. At a national level, because we don't actually attend any call-outs we can't directly rely on the incredible goodwill local teams have earned. So the challenges are mounting and the official email address is set up and it's time to crack on.

At the AGM Mike told the audience that my role would be primarily to pick up the

low-hanging fruit, which is fine but it will have to be very low in my case!

I am keen to identify and develop bread and butter funding we can count on year on year and hopefully will help cover the running costs while we target the larger projects. As the great work of the MREW PR team continues we should see a continued raising of the MREW profile which I have no doubt helps all of us.

It's worth mentioning the huge support we've had from the JD Foundation. Their contribution makes a massive difference to the funds available and should not be overlooked. Maintaining relationships like this are vital and can be rewarding personally too. Elaine Gilliland led on this year's JD Foundation day in June, along with MPSRO. It's a great day out and an opportunity for team members from across England and Wales to get involved.

PDMRO is hosting the Princes' Charity Day this year and again, we shouldn't be complacent. Supporting these days in your region can be great fun while helping the attendees have a really great day out.

While my role is about fundraising for the national body and from there, out to individual teams, I am keen to ensure all teams benefit from the wealth of knowledge that already exists out there. I would encourage all teams to get their fundraising officers to join the Facebook Mountain Rescue Fundraising group to share and take advantage of the various opportunities that exist for them. We all share the same goals of funding and supporting our respective teams so the less reinventing the wheel we can do the better. Membership of the group seems to

be going well and we only have a couple of gaps across regions. It would be great to have every team represented there.

One of the first things I have started to re-establish is the National Fundraising subcommittee. I am pleased to say I have been offered help from a number of fundraisers from around the regions but we still need a few more, ideally from NESRA, LDSAMRA and SWSARA. The role of this group is still to be finalised but it will be definitely working towards national fundraising goals primarily and supporting team fundraising as a secondary role. If you are interested in getting involved or want more information please get in touch.

The team fundraising meeting at the May and November meetings will be just that, with the emphasis on sharing good practice and sources of funding for teams looking for funding. The subcommittee will hopefully be on hand to share information on national initiatives and continue to keep teams up to date on progress.

Standing for and being voted into the National Fundraising Officer role probably doesn't make a lot of sense to most people. It certainly wasn't a contested post but I hope I can revive the role and make a real go of it by making my contributions to the grand scheme of mountain rescue. It's important to keep in mind that MREW is almost entirely 'staffed' by volunteers who put in the hours to help all the teams that operate within Mountain Rescue England and Wales. ☺

RICHARD CARRATU MREW FUNDRAISING OFFICER



Images with thanks to Kendal MRT.

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IF YOU CAN'T COMMUNICATE ...YOU CAN'T OPERATE

We've been using the PrimeTech Satellite internet systems for a couple of years and it has proved its worth many times in our more remote areas. But more recently we've incorporated it into our new control vehicle with a small modification to the modem Peli-case introducing a weather-proof RJ45 connector which allows us to have the modem hard-wired into the vehicles network for improved connectivity. The new control vehicle has a repeater linked to other repeaters on a network via the internet, so a good stable internet connection was vital. Quite amazing to think that a simple two way radio communication between base and a team member in the remotest of locations is actually travelling via satellite. We almost have no 'blackspot areas'. Kendal MRT



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Raising funds for rescue

I was reluctant to write anything about the fifteen days I spent walking the Pennine Way, but I'm not sure why. Perhaps because walking from Edale to Kirk Yetholm alone is a profoundly different experience than a Saturday walk in the Peak District. And, walking alone, if anything goes wrong, it might be hours until somebody finds you. You can be in signal blackspots for many hours at a time.

But the biggest impact for me was psychological — without someone to talk to, solve problems or share a view with.

The highs amplify to levels of ecstasy, but the lows can be agonising. In two short weeks, I have never cried so many tears of happiness and despair, sometimes within hours of each other. I found myself in so much distress for the few days leading up to leaving and until Sarah came to save me on the second night, I developed a stutter.

My plan hadn't originally been to walk the Pennine Way in April because, as people kept telling me after I'd set off, it's bloody challenging — weather is unpredictable, the bogs are boggy, the trail less populated, the nights colder — but I knew I wanted to walk it in one go and that it can take most people 19–21 days. Then I found myself between jobs with a month off work and it all happened so quickly: plotting a route, buying kit and preparing physically. Of course, any exercise you do over a few short weeks is unlikely to prepare you for an undertaking such as this, but I was naively and blissfully unaware of that.

I spent a lot of money on kit. I would likely make the same choices again, but I hadn't prepared myself for the physical undertaking of carrying a 14kg base weight to Scotland. And while most of my kit was unfamiliar to me at the beginning, it wasn't in the sense I didn't know what it was. I'd been camping plenty, I'd used a fire steel, I knew how to cook dehydrated food, I'd spent countless hours in the outdoors, I knew how to sleep on an inflatable mat.

I had my reservations about navigation more than anything. I've never been a fan of paper map and compass. I struggle with

The Pennine Way chases along the mountain tops across the rugged backbone of England and offers 268 miles of the finest upland walking in England.

During the second week, I even managed to see some of it.

maps thanks to an annoyingly inconvenient red-green colour-blindness and simply don't trust myself to see the detail.

In the last few years I've relied on ViewRanger and my Apple Watch, but that didn't feel robust enough to tackle 268 miles of remote, cold, indistinct terrain so I reluctantly splashed a ton of money on a Garmin Fenix 5 Plus. It took me a matter of hours to realise the maps it comes with are godawful — about as useful as someone scribbling a map of the Pennine Way on a cigarette packet then setting it on fire. So I bought Garmin's TOPO Great Britain PRO maps (OS 1:50,000 leisure). With another £150 spent on top of the cost of the watch, I headed out for a field test, using Garmin's LiveTrack feature in place of the more familiar ViewRanger BuddyBeacon.

Even the TOPO Great Britain PRO maps were appalling — pixelated to the point where I couldn't work out which exit of the roundabout outside my house I needed to take. And the battery life is significantly less than Garmin claims. The LiveTrack feature worked as advertised, but the battery drain on the connected iPhone was far beyond the drain I'd seen BuddyBeacon use. Add in clunky software and poor support and you've got yourself about £800-worth of deep and unrelenting regret. The watch went back the next day.

I set off for Fieldhead Campsite in Edale on 31 March 2019, ready to hit the trail as

an April fool. I got a lot of things wrong and only by the grace of friends was I able to correct them and continue.

Day 1: Edale to Crowden 17.75 miles / 28.57 km

I woke from a restful night's sleep, beaming with pride. Last year, I spent some time away from work due to a lingering battle with depression and anxiety. To have made it to the start felt like I'd already conquered something and the messages I received from family and close friends confirmed how monumental just turning up had been for me — 'even if you turn back now, you should be proud of yourself for getting this far.'

It's not long before you get to Jacob's Ladder, which I'd walked down a few times

but never dared ascend. It's not as bad as it looks. I mean it's not fun starting your day with Jacob's Ladder, but you've already tackled the second biggest climb of the whole thing!

This is essentially how the Pennine Way works: are you standing at the highest point you can see? If you're not, you have some climbing to do. If you've already clambered up the highest thing within in a kilometre, look around for the next highest thing. That's where you're going.

I don't want write too much about landscapes and views other than where I found them to be profoundly special. For me, the Pennine Way was more about the people I met and interacted with along the way. That said, the worst thing about the first day isn't Jacob's Ladder. You get that out of the way fairly quickly and you're onto the Kinder plateau, where the mass

trespass of Kinder Scout made this kind of idle meandering all the way to Scotland possible.

The worst thing about the first day is the utter bastard of a slightly-uphill mile from Torside Reservoir to Crowden Camping and Caravanning Club. I'd paid for my camping in advance, but it was the first time I encountered the kindness of strangers. As I arrived, looking like someone who'd grossly underestimated how far 17 miles is with an 18 kg backpack (I hadn't eaten most of my food), I was refunded about half my camping fee. Turns out the club has an unadvertised rate for backpackers which is significantly cheaper than what you pay on the website. I was

grateful for the spare change because there was no phone signal at the site and I wanted nothing more than to use the pay phone to call Sarah.

That night, the campsite was largely deserted. Just me and one other Pennine Way walker named Paul, who pitched up next to me and would be someone I'd walk with a little later in the week.

Day 2: Crowden to Standedge 12.36 miles / 19.89 km

It rained overnight. A lot. My tent started to pool water inside. I packed up, including what felt like an additional 2 kg of rain, and

Opposite: Day 1: In the Nag's Head Beer Garden, the official start of the Pennine Way and a life-changing adventure. Below: Day 7: Cam Fell with the Ribbleshead Viaduct hiding in the distance. Images © Mark Rickaby.



set off feeling cold, wet and miserable for Standedge.

This was probably the most physically challenging day for me. My pack weighed a ton and there was hail. Hail that turned into gentle snow. Perhaps hail and snow in April is nature's way of balancing things out. The Spine Race which follows the Pennine Way was, after all, blessed with very spring-like weather in January. Only fitting that I get winter in April.

Despite being the shortest day, it felt the longest by far. In the distance behind me, I could see another Pennine Way walker gaining on me. He passed me at Black Hill and boasted of how he'd been ruthless with pack weight, allowed himself only a GPS as a luxury. 'I'm not the fastest walker,' he said as he smugly overtook, 'but I can easily manage this.' The clouds came over and Saddleworth Moor was nothing but hail for the rest of the day.

Sarah met me at Standedge. I couldn't go on as I was. There's a romance in camping the length of the Pennine Way, but my pack was far too heavy. I was miserable, the weather had changed for the worse and not at all in the way the forecast had predicted and I knew there was no way I'd make it past Hebden Bridge, let alone the rest of the trail, if something didn't change. It would cost another £1,000 — money I hadn't budgeted — but I wanted to give it my best shot. Still no guarantee of making it to Scotland, but I couldn't face giving up now.

Lessons learned with pack weight, I cut everything back to my day hiking kit and booked up the next few nights in hostels and the cheapest B&Bs money could buy.

Day 3: Standedge to Calder Valley 19.35 miles / 31.14 km

'The worst part of the journey is behind you,' said Wainwright, 'from now on the Pennine Way can be enjoyed.' My god was he right.

Despite thick morning mist, I was flying! It didn't even bother me that this part of the Pennine Way is pretty grim. The hail had turned to snow and it was coming down heavy, even settling in places. Sadly, it seems that wherever civilisation meets nature, nature inevitably loses. Wherever there are roads, you'll find litter.

I barely noticed the ascent to Stoodley Pike Monument several miles further down the trail. There's been a monument here since 1815, commemorating the defeat of Napoleon and the surrender of Paris, but the earlier structure fell victim to a lightning strike. Its replacement, designed 1854, moved it slightly further away from the edge of the hill and including a lightning conductor. Despite several lightning strikes since, it remains standing.

I headed for Hebden Bridge and the unofficial Hebden Bridge Loop. I had one rule for this trip: I could add distance, but

not remove it. The notice boards claim that Hebden Bridge adds just two kilometres to the route. It fails to mention that the first kilometre is vertically down while the second is vertically back up.

I'd planned to stay at the New Delight Inn so my day finished there, where I was met by an old friend. Leanne picked me up from Bacup and took me back to her home. It was such a relaxing evening, it felt like a turning point in my anxiety about the trip — it might be me walking the miles, but I had a safety net I hadn't even noticed.

As we drove away from the New Delight Inn, I noticed a single, solitary tent camped in the snow outside: Paul.

Day 4: Calder Valley to Ickornshaw 15.20 miles / 24.46 km

Dropped off next morning by Leanne's husband, I wandered back to the trail. I don't remember too much about this day in all honesty, except it was the first day where the weather broke and I could see something that wasn't cloud.

This was another of those days where the view was secondary to the people. I caught up with Paul as we crossed Stanbury Moor.

Remarkably, he was carrying a similar pack weight to the one I set out with and had made it this far despite a much slower pace than I was currently walking at. 'Have you met the people going to Shetland yet?' he asked. I hadn't, but soon would.

I left him at Ickornshaw Moor and picked up the pace, arriving at Squirrel Wood Campsite in Ickornshaw an hour before they opened for check-in. I'd been planning to camp here, but was lucky enough to have a night in the Shepherd's Hut instead. That night, the heavens opened and I felt for Paul who I knew was in the next field camping in the cold and torrential rain. Another camper made it into the site that evening, but huddled for shelter from the relentless rain. The first week in April is not the best time to walk the Pennine Way.

Day 5: Ickornshaw to Malham 18.31 miles / 29.47 km

The morning was glorious and in stark contrast to the boggy moor that brought me to Ickornshaw. I waved goodbye to Paul — the last time we spoke, he'd had reservations about being able to continue. I hope he managed to keep going.

Wainwright said the first half of today was characterised by mostly 'muck and manure', but the sun was out, there were lambs in the fields and life felt good.

This day felt like an easy walk — one of those classically British countryside walks you can't help but adore. My first panoramic view of the week at Pinhaw Beacon before enjoying a leisurely walk along the Leeds Liverpool Canal toward Gargrave.

Shortly after Gargrave I came upon the people walking from Stoke to Shetland. We exchanged hellos and I confirmed that they were indeed the mythical couple I'd heard about. They were sheltering behind a dry stone wall and eating lunch so I didn't want to disturb them with small talk, but little did I know I'd cross paths with them every day until Cross Fell. We never really spoke other than to laugh about how we kept managing to bump into each other in such remote places, but they were a welcome cadence in my trip and it was a better journey knowing they were walking part of it with me.

I arrived in Malham at the Miresfield Farm B&B, a place that looks like it hasn't been updated since the 1970s. I'm not entirely sure the owner knows it's a B&B. As I arrived and introduced myself, I could only

Opposite: Day 3: The view from Heptonstall. Below: Day 5: The couple walking from Stoke to Shetland, as at home in the landscape as anyone I've ever met. Images © Mark Rickaby.



wonder at his bewilderment. I think I interrupted Emmerdale and it must have thrown him off. I can only assume it must seem to him like strangers have been arriving and expecting to use one of his ten spare bedrooms for all these years and he's reluctantly given in to the onslaught of people throwing money at him for the use of a bed.

Regardless, I was glad to take the weight off my legs for a while. I'd twisted my right knee a couple of days back and it was starting to hurt.

Day 6: Malham to Horton-in-Ribblesdale 14.40 miles / 23.17 km

The limestone country around Malham was every bit as dramatic and impressive as Wainwright described it — 'the best walking territory so far encountered along the Pennine way'.

Since losing my pack, today was easily the most physically demanding day. The climb up the limestone is, in part, steps laid out for tourists not travelling quite so far and I must admit I find 'improvements' to the landscape often more of a burden than just paying attention to what's underfoot. Your efforts are at least rewarded with the impressive Malham Tarn.

Just before the second sustained climb of the day to Fountains Fell, I passed a chap who had parked his car just after Malham Tarn and was doing a circular walk that followed this section of the Pennine Way for a time. He caught up to me over the course of a few miles and I took the opportunity to ask him about the rest of today, cautious about the guidebook's description of it as 'challenging'. As it turns out, he'd done the Pennine Way a few years previously.

'Seems like a superb day for views, I'm glad the weather is on my side after the last week,' I began. Always open with the weather and, where possible, encourage the local by being complimentary about their local area. 'Is it as challenging a day as the guidebook suggests?'

'Depends how fit you are,' he said. 'True. Would you say it's more challenging than the first day?'

'Depends how fit you are,' he said. 'I'm not doing too badly. My knee is very sore, but painkillers are helping. I hear Cross Fell is the hardest day of the walk?' 'Aye. Depends how fit you are,' he said. I wished the man well, not meaning a word of it.

Fountains Fell was indeed a sustained climb, the descent no better, my knee screaming at me the whole way down. In the distance, I could see the imposing face of Pen-y-Ghent and knew I was heading in that direction. It was, after all, the steepest thing I could see within a kilometre. This being a Saturday and the first popular weekend of the year for the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge, I arrived to find myself amongst people for the first time. Most of them were tackling it fresh, whereas I was ten miles in. I overtook almost all of them. If you happen to be taking on Pen-y-Ghent in anything other than ideal conditions, don't bother. The path is fine, but one mistake and you're going to lose the ability to walk.

Wainwright described the descent to Horton-in-Ribblesdale from Pen-y-Ghent as 'very, very good' and in this, he couldn't be more wrong. It's interminable and tortuous and an awful end to a good day's walk when your knee already hurts like buggery. This was the first of only a few times in the whole thing where I had to stop because I could no longer put weight on it.



That night, I fell into a deep sleep in a camping pod at the south end of the village. It was luxurious — both the hospitality and lodging surpassed some of the best hotels I've managed to expense with work.

Day 7: Horton-in-Ribblesdale to Hawes 14.29 miles / 23km

Not many people have good things to say about today — the views are pleasing, but not impressive. Pathfinding is easy, but at the expense of wildness. No conveniences along the route and not much by way of hills. Exactly what I needed.

Hawes was as bustling a market town as you'll find on the Pennine Way and the conveniences were welcome. I needed dinner, I needed breakfast and I needed Compeed.

Day 8: Hawes to Tan Hill 16.83 miles / 27.09km

The guidebook calls today a Pennine Way classic, but for me it wasn't. Apparently the views over Great Shunner Fell are stunning, but I saw nothing but cloud. I even did a little video about the perils of hillwalking at the summit.

Thankfully, I caught a break in the cloud around Thwaite, where I stopped for lunch and to let people know I was okay after several hours without a data connection to update BuddyBeacon. I left Hawes and climbed up to Kisdon, where the Way cuts along the dashing cleft of Swaledale and to Keld, via some waterfalls.

It's almost impossible to capture how imposing the hills are in this valley, but the view was one of the best of the whole trip. No vistas or great expanses, but it's one of those views where the cloud lifts just enough to let a little light through and it reminds you how much there is to be happy with in the world.

The happiness, however, was short-lived. When you read that Tan Hill is the highest pub in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, it doesn't necessarily register (or at least it didn't with me) that you'll have to walk uphill to it. I assumed my uphill was done and that Tan Hill would be on a ridge, but what actually happens is you descend to what feels like a few thousand feet below sea level, where there's still persistent cloud, and then endlessly and tortuously climb through a foggy bog where you can hardly see your hand in front of your face, let alone see anything that might allow you to navigate across a notoriously remote and isolated moor. With less than ten metres visibility in some places, this was the most scared I've ever been of my navigational skills failing me. If you take a wrong turn on these moors and in these conditions, nobody is finding you for a long, long time.

Day 9: Tan Hill to Middleton-in-Teesdale 17.21 miles / 27.70km

The featherweight backpacker who overtook me on Day 2 is having breakfast. He's telling a German couple how he walked to a height of 2,000 feet yesterday and how the few 20+ mile walks we have coming up won't be a problem for him.

Only one word could adequately describe today: hateful. I have never done a walk so miserable. If the rest of the Pennine Way was like today, nobody would walk it. The bog of Sleightholme Moor swallowed me thrice, each time above my boots and filling them with mud and water. If there's anything good to be said about this stretch, it's that you've made it to the half way point. Beyond that, there's nothing good.

My knee was so painful, I headed straight for the pharmacy for a knee support and ibuprofen. There was no way I was giving up. Even if I can never walk without pain again, I was getting to Scotland.

I'd been looking forward to getting to Middleton-in-Teesdale and, despite the path that led me to it, I loved the place. It's a charmingly perfect little market town with connections to my family history. A few hundred years ago, some of my family migrated from where they first settled in Kirkbymoorside to Catterick, in North Yorkshire. From there, others moved to Middleton-in-Teesdale.

Day 10: Middleton-in-Teesdale to Dufton 20.75 miles / 33.39km

I came down to breakfast at my B&B in Middleton-in-Teesdale to find I'd be sharing it with the featherweight backpacker (again). He doesn't recognise me, not from Black Hill or from Tan Hill.

'I passed a guy on the second day carrying what looked like a massive backpack up Black Hill, but I haven't seen him since,' he tells me. I nod, whilst he continues. 'And a German couple at Tan Hill yesterday who are going to have to cut their miles in half to get to the end, they're really struggling.'

'How are you finding it?' I ask.

'My body is telling me to give up and I booked a bus home this morning.'

Day 10 is already my favourite day — twenty miles of Pennine Way magic. One of those days that puts the 'great' in 'great outdoors'. This is England showing off.

The walk takes you through a picturesque valley that takes in meadows and flagstone paths and even boulders where the path completely disappears before delivering you at the wonderfully-named and equally brilliant sight and sound of Cauldron Snout.

Today isn't yet over, though. For a day that's already been filled with three superb waterfalls, there's more to come.

A challenging scramble up the side of Cauldron Snout brings you to a long stretch on the moors before you arrive at the most impressive sight of the whole Pennine Way — High Cup Nick, a deep chasm on the Pennine fellsides.

Day 11: Dufton to Alston 19.79 miles / 31.85km

The toughest day on the Pennine Way according to the official National Trails guidebook, but I rather enjoyed it. Sure, there were stops to catch my breath, but I felt good, there was a view, and my knee only seemed to torment me once I hit mile seven each day, so I managed to do the hard bit without any pain at all.

I saw the people walking to Shetland get closer and closer from a different path in the distance until we met for our daily 'hello' on Great Dun Fell near the radar station.

They passed me here while I paused to take in the view and I caught a photo of them as they left. I took for granted I'd bump into them every day, but I wouldn't see them for the rest of the trail. All I know about them is that they're walking from Stoke to Shetland and when they get there, they're walking back again. I asked if they had a blog or website and he said 'No, we enjoy walking more than writing about it. We just like doing long walks'.

I've heard that a view on Cross Fell is an especially rare thing to witness, but the weather gods rewarded me for persevering through hail, snow and rain the previous week and granted me clear skies and endless vistas here.

From Cross Fell, I dropped down to Greg's Hut, a bothy restored by the friends of John Gregory who was killed in a climbing accident in the Alps in 1968. A group of his Climbing Club friends adopted the building, an old lead-mining blacksmith's shop, rebuilt it from a ruin and maintained it for years, rightfully earning its place as a Pennine Way institution.

Short of wading through puddles filled with frogs and frogspawn, the rest of the day is tedious. The Corpse Road miners' track from Greg's Hut to Garrigill feels endless and is unpleasant underfoot, but it's better than straying from the route. The fells here were mined so errors in navigation and judgement could spell trouble.

Day 12: Alston to Greenhead 17.72 miles / 28.52km

Breakfast at the YHA and a Yorkshireman has already started. He explains to me, in detail, what I can expect today. Where the stiles are, where the signs aren't clear, where I need to take a compass bearing. He explains how to take a compass bearing. He takes so long over this that the hostel owner brings his hot breakfast and has to return it to the kitchen because he



Jess Moon Bowen, Mountain Rescue Volunteer
Brecon Beacons, Wales

I am Jess

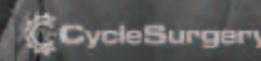
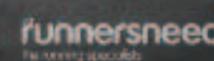
This is my outdoors

"The best thing about mountain rescue? It's definitely the team and of course, helping people. It just gives me a really big rush, a real adrenaline rush, knowing that I'm going out there to help someone."

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Let's go somewhere

hasn't finished his cornflakes yet. He explains why a paper map and compass are the best navigational tool in unimaginable detail before describing how he managed to get so lost on this section that he had to repeat a part of it. Well, pal, I use ViewRanger and I've never been more than 50 yards off the route.

If there is anywhere so remote on the Pennine Way that one can have breakfast unchallenged by a pedant, I haven't found it.

I'd been dreading today. The guidebook says it's the worst day of the Pennine Way and everybody I spoke to told me that Blenkinsopp Common can invoke nightmares in even the hardest Wayfarers. Thanks, however, to the misery of Day 9 and my mind's propensity to fear the absolute worst, I didn't find it too bad. It doesn't have spectacular views, but it's good, honest British countryside with the odd viaduct thrown in to keep it interesting.

Blenkinsopp Common was, as predicted, boggy. I have no idea how anything can possibly be so consistently wet, but I assume it's regularly topped up with the tears of Wayfarers who doggedly stick to the proper Pennine Way route. My boots got wet, my socks got wet, but I wasn't walking through a cloud. I have rarely been so wet on dry land.

Day 13: Greenhead to Bellingham 22.72 miles / 36.56 km

Somebody once told me that not much of Hadrian's Wall remains. If I ever remember who that person was, I'll be sure to tell them they're wrong. I was astounded how much is preserved and was in awe at how far you can still follow it.

The Pennine Way follows the most dramatic stretches of Hadrian's Wall for eight miles (12.8km) before breaking from the stones at Rapidshaw Gap toward Wark Forest and then to farmland and moorland before dumping the tired Wayfarer onto the road into Bellingham. I think this might be the first time I've walked through a forest undisturbed by human activity. It was like walking on the softest mattress you could imagine and the greens of the forest looked almost over-saturated in their vibrancy.

I was expecting this day to be tiring for its sheer length, but I hadn't quite anticipated how undulating those eight miles along Hadrian's Wall would be. It's exhausting.

Day 14: Bellingham to Byrness 16.64 miles / 26.78 km

This is the day that takes you to the Cheviots, and it does it gently enough that you arrive rested enough for what follows. I disapprove of the cliché, but today was a day of two halves.

The first half is more bog-hopping and moorland, but a steep climb at the half way point takes you up to an unexpected stony

forest track. It was on the ascent that I met Bernard who was staying at the same place as me this evening, so we arrange to share dinner and a beer later before parting ways. Having a solid track under your feet is welcome, but this one goes on too long. Its saving grace is that it deposits you at the door of Forest View Walkers Inn in Byrness, run by the most exceptional hosts you'll meet anywhere.

Forest View has, over the last thirteen years, become something of a Pennine Way institution. Colin and Joyce are the most welcoming and charming people you could ever hope to meet.

It's striking to look around the walls of Forest View and see how vital this place is to the community. Byrness really doesn't have much of anything — no pub, no shop and a long way to go until you find one. The walls of the hostel are adorned with certificates — one for each year for at least the last ten — praising how much Colin and Joyce have raised for the air ambulance and mountain rescue, just by asking Pennine Way walkers to donate a little change if they make themselves a cup of tea. For every certificate on the wall, there also appears to be an award for excellence in service as a hostel. It's easy to see why. The food here was home-cooked and utterly delicious and the ales Colin keeps in the wood burner-heated bar are up there with the best I've tasted anywhere. Bernard and I marvel at the meal, the ambience, the hospitality and how Colin and Joyce have got everything exactly right here. It's unpretentious and perfect. It's precisely what people who've walked 245 miles want.

Day 15: Byrness to Kirk Yetholm 25.93 miles / 41.74 km

I woke up to a 4:30am alarm on my last day, ready to tackle a near marathon distance across the Cheviots. My knee was complaining immediately, but I took half a day's normal dose of ibuprofen with breakfast to get me as far into the walk as I could get before the pain really hit.

I left my room and stumbled into the communal area, where I found Colin and Joyce had laid out an early bird breakfast. They'd also dried and cleaned my boots and insoles, leaving them out and stuffed with newspaper to keep them dry. It was the first time in nearly fifteen days I'd put on dry, warm boots and it made a massive difference.

I should explain why I deviated from the guidebook here, tackling this last section in one go. Normally, Colin and Joyce offer a half-way service that almost every one of their guests takes advantage of — on the first day, you walk half way across the Cheviots and deviate from the route a little to where you'll find Colin waiting for you in his minibus to take you back to Forest View for another hot meal, cosy bed and filling

breakfast. The next morning, he drops you back at the half way point and you stroll into Kirk Yetholm having done two short but steep days rather than one long and incredibly tough one.

However, the day before Colin had to take Joyce to hospital and he wasn't able to offer the half-way service. The alternative was to book two nights in a hotel at the finish line and use a taxi service from there, but there were two issues with that. One, the guy who runs the taxi service was on holiday until the 17th and I needed it on the 15th. And two, I really didn't like the idea of arriving at the Border Hotel in Kirk Yetholm before I'd actually finished.

So a marathon with nearly 5,000 feet of ascent it was. Getting up onto the ridge was the hardest part of the morning — especially before 6.00 am — but it was the cold I hadn't anticipated. Snow still clung to sheltered parts of the ridge while the infrequent boards and flagstones that cover the particularly boggy areas were covered in frost and ice. I nearly lost my footing a few times.

I say that the boards and flagstones covered the worst parts of the bog, but I found at least two places on the route



Day 10: Standing on top of High Force waterfall, one of three on a day that ended with High Cup Nick, a deep chasm on the Pennine fellside.



Day 13: Hadrian's Wall stretching into the distance and still very much intact

where my walking pole would sink two foot into the muddy depths.

This exposed ridge is used for military training and the ominous signs make it clear you should be especially keen when it comes to navigation.

My plan was to make it to the first mountain refuge hut, rest for fifteen minutes, push on to Windy Gyle, then onto the second mountain refuge hut, then take the low level route into Kirk Yetholm.

The first part of the morning went better than expected. I covered the first eight miles to the hut in almost record time, arriving at 9.17 am, only three hours forty

minutes after I left Forest View. Not bad, given the terrain. A short stop to catch my breath and eat the breakfast bar I'd stowed away and I was off again. The next ten miles were more difficult, taking in bogs and paths and a few severe ascents.

I was completely unprepared for the wind between the first hut and Kirk Yetholm. At one point I took off a glove to take a photo of the view and it was over the side of the mountain before I knew it. In my 10+ years of hillwalking, I've often wondered how people can lose the odd glove and now I know. They don't call this place Windy Gyle for nothing.



I paused at the second hut for longer than planned, partly because I hadn't expected to be there for another 90 minutes, but also because my leg was screaming at me with every step by that point. The descents from Windy Gyle and the Schill had ruined me and I knew the next eight miles would be more difficult than the last eighteen.

That said, I changed my plan. Before setting off, I'd planned to stop at each hut, not bothering with the summit of the Cheviot (it's not on the official route), and making my way into Kirk Yetholm via the low level route. As I sat in that hut, exhausted and in pain, I knew there was something I had to do. I was going to take the high level route.

This decision is one of those ones you can't rationalise. If you're splitting this last section into two days, you'd definitely take the high level route, but if you're doing it in one mad dash from Byrness to Kirk Yetholm, almost everyone would tell you to take the low level route and not make it any harder than it needs to be. The thing is, this whole thing had been hard. I'd overcome anxiety and depression to get to the start line. I endured hail and rain and snow over the first week, and everything about my plan changed when I lost my tent. I'd spent more money on this than I've ever spent on anything in my life, taking half a pack of ibuprofen every day just to make walking bearable. If I took the low level alternative route at the end, I knew I'd never forgive myself. The high level route was the harder option, but worth it — the views were exceptional even if the wind desperately wanted to send me plummeting back down to the low level route below.

I knew family and friends were watching my progress on BuddyBeacon as I reached the road into Kirk Yetholm. I paused at the road to send a quick message to a few people who had been following since the beginning: 'This last mile might be slow, I think I might have to crawl.' I didn't crawl, but I definitely didn't run.

I arrived at The Border Hotel in Kirk Yetholm at 5.01 pm on Monday 15 April, a different man from the one that left Edale on 1 April. ☺

Left: Day 8: The world famous Tan Hill Inn, 30 metres away and still barely visible.

Postscript: As the time of writing, Mark's justgiving fundraising total showed £1,417.26 + Gift Aid raised for Mountain Rescue England and Wales. A huge thank you to him for taking up what was clearly a phenomenal personal challenge on our behalf. Good to hear he made it in (almost) one piece and we have it on good authority that he's still walking and enjoying the outdoors! Thanks Mark!

London Marathon 2019

running reports

Raising funds for rescue



TIM WAINWRIGHT

It was with a certain level of trepidation I headed up to London, a whole mix of emotions. I was excited for the race and my first London Marathon – after many years of applying unsuccessfully to the ballot I was on the start line!

I was nervous about my training and just wanted to make it to the finish. My time had started not to matter. It was simply about finishing. I was also proud. Proud to be part of the London Marathon, proud of the support I had received and the money I had raised and proud to representing mountain rescue.

I'd put in place a good training plan with a couple of shorter runs during the week and, whenever possible, a longer run at the weekend. At first the longer runs were really hard but before long ten miles was a standard, perhaps stretching to twelve or fourteen. I took different routes around London – one weekend running out along the river, through Richmond Park to Twickenham – but my favourite by far was through central London and up through

Hyde Park, past Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, early in the morning, a nod to the Guards on Horse Guards Parade before heading up past the Bomber Command Memorial and into the wide open spaces of Hyde Park then back down through Sloane Square.

My preparations went well until the final month. I was feeling relatively confident with my muscle power building, my split times were consistent and I was starting to get into a routine pace but then life inevitably got in the way. With some time away and being ill for over a week, my reduced levels of running fell at just the point I should have been hitting 16 or 18 miles and made me feel like I was slipping behind. With one week to go I had to do my own 'mental health marathon' – it wasn't 26 miles, but I

put in a sufficiently long run on Good Friday to prove to myself I could still do it. It was good preparation in that I was able to have a full dress rehearsal of the main day – a similar get-up time, the same breakfast of champions (peanut butter and banana on toast), my compression socks and the same clothes I'd wear on the day, the same pouch for my gels and the same kind of running routine.

All too fast, the weekend was upon us and it was great to have my parents down the night before to settle my nerves. The very wise words of my father were, 'Don't smash it – just do it!' Race day came and I tried to keep myself calm. Nothing else I could do now...

And what an amazing day it was! The London Marathon is by far one of the most superb experiences I have ever had. Despite being just one of 40,000+ runners, you feel every bit as important as the Mo Farahs of this world! Each and every road you pass seemed completely filled with crowds out to support. The noise as you make your way round is like nothing else I've ever heard. From mile one there are people offering you sweets and drinks (I managed to resist the jelly babies until mile 18), and people who don't know you from the next runner shout your name with the same gusto as if they had been tracking you the whole way around. I was initially

buoyed by spotting two friends at mile two – I saw them and knew it was going to be a good day for running!

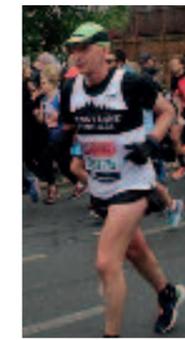
I knew I could do the first thirteen miles with relative ease, so I focused on that to start with. Cutty Sark came and went and before long I was over Tower Bridge. From there it was three miles to sixteen, then 'the countdown': ten, nine, eight, seven miles, all the way to the finish! It was amazing to see family and friends along the way at the roughly pre-agreed miles of eight, eighteen and twenty-five – constantly scanning the crowd for the whole mile to make sure I didn't miss them and make sure my mother got a sweaty high five at some point around the course! As I headed through the loop at Canary Wharf towards the end, all I can remember was the almost deafening, solid wall of noise.

Luckily, I didn't hit the dreaded 'wall' at any particular point – don't get me wrong, it was tough going but the training really helped! As I hit 22 miles I could definitely feel I was reaching my limit. My legs, knees and feet were aching, but I'd just run 22 miles and there was no way I wasn't running the last 4.2! As I finally made it to Embankment it seemed a very long road ahead. Surprisingly I was still just on track for a sub 4:30 which in the back of my head I was really keen to achieve. The run up the Embankment and down Birdcage Walk seem to take forever but this was it – I was going to achieve one of my greatest ambitions.

As I turned the corner onto the Mall, I raised my fist in joy and pointing to the sky, I remembered my dear late friend Christopher Bell who'd given me strength throughout the race and I could hear him shouting his motto: 'Go harder, go faster!' Well, go harder and go faster I had to! 4hr 29 was on the clock and there was no way I wasn't getting 4:30 so a full-on sprint down the Mall ensued. I found some energy somewhere and hit the finish line bang on 4:30. I'll take that for my first!

Emotions definitely got the better of me as I picked up my medal. It's so much more than just a race – it's a truly uplifting experience. From the people out running, those out supporting, the crazy world record attempts, those in wheelchairs, those walking, the sights, the sounds, the stories, the personal triumphs and heartbreaks, the feats of endurance and sheer bloody mindedness to get it done. More than anything it is the amazing amount of money raised remembering very special people. I was proud to be part of the 'Thanks a Billion' marathon year, helping organisations like mountain rescue whose amazing work can continue thanks to the funds raised.

A huge thanks to my wife for putting up with early weekend starts and long Saturday runs, to my family and friends for supporting me, to mountain rescue teams for their amazing work and support and to Chris for inspiring me to just do it, albeit harder and faster next time! 🙌



IAN SADLER

Ian finished the marathon in 3 hours 42 minutes 44 seconds which he tells us he was pleased with as 'it was on top of the Manchester Marathon three weeks earlier (3 hours 29 minutes 35 seconds) and the Liverpool Mersey Tunnel 10k the week before!'

'My overriding memories were the numbers running and the noise of the crowds on London Bridge and Pall Mall. Incredible! Prior to the Marathon I went to the Excel Running show which was very good on both the Friday and Saturday. Also on the Saturday morning I took the opportunity to run the Victoria Dock Park Run'. The funds raised weren't just down to Ian's efforts with the marathon. 'The Barmouth Leisure Centre also helped me raise funds by Running the Barmathon, on the same day at the same time. They raised £500 of my total by running up and down the Barmouth Prom for 26.2 miles in around 4 hours 15 minutes'.

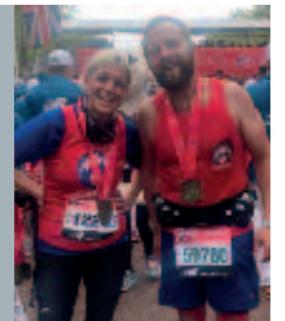


A huge thank you to all our marathon runners who between them have raised

£10301.26 + Gift Aid

LEE STONES

'I can honestly say it was one of the worst and best things I've ever done in a day! The atmosphere was amazing, the crowds were out from start to finish and they got larger and louder as I got wearier.'



'I did hit a wall during my training following a three-hour run of approx 28km. My knees decided they didn't want to do any more running and were quite painful. A couple of sessions of osteopathy did help, but it meant me not doing my final 3.5-hour run along with a number of shorter runs. I felt positive on the day and had no pre-run niggles, aches or pains. I started at the front zone 7 of the green area, 38 minutes after the official start time, set off reasonably quick and for 2km, I was third in the London Marathon, until we

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CHRIS LISTON

One of the key things for Chris was the support on the day between fellow mountain rescue runners. 'The pats on the back and best wishes I received (and offered) both before and during the race was amazing. It's funny what a tee shirt relating to a genuinely good cause can do!

'London was my third marathon, having completed New York and Berlin. But there is something very different about London and the spectator support was another level! I was nearer to the back than the front, but the support never seemed to wain. Children high fived me, people screamed support at every turn, the roar was deafening at Tower Bridge and the Cutty Sark and the music was unbelievable too — particularly The Run Dem Crew towards the end, when I really needed it. It was like a party.

'Then there was the emotion of it all. I wasn't nervous about Berlin or New York, but I was terrified about London with a few days to go. But as soon as I got there and got started, and particularly towards the end on the Mall, I was welling up! It wasn't pride in the truest sense, because I was struggling with injury and was about an hour slower than I would have liked — more just pure joy at being a part of it all. I loved every minute!

Then there was Sir Mo. He is the reason I got into this running caper, and it was an absolute pleasure to say I was in the same race as him, albeit a little way behind him! It's been an absolute pleasure to have run for mountain rescue.

merged with the other runners! I first saw my fiancée and eldest son at the Cutty Shark, which was a massive boost. I felt brilliant until about halfway, when I felt a blister on my left foot. I hadn't had a single blister throughout my training! I stopped soon after at a St John's Ambulance station for a plaster, which almost turned into a ten minute form-filling exercise. I begged to put it on quickly myself so I could get on my way.

I ran the first half in two hours and I was still feeling good and confident of a sub 4.5 hour finish. At around 30km I hit the dreaded wall, and felt as though I was running through treacle. This continued on and off for what felt like a lifetime. My pace slowed and the pacers started passing me. My head was saying, 'Come on, you can do this!', my body was saying 'what are you doing to me?' but I got the feeling every runner around me felt the same.

Having refused any gels, beans or Lucozade Sport, I was presented with a weird looking, slimy orange sack at the 23-mile station, which I reluctantly took and ingested. It went with a pop in my mouth — instantly refreshing — so I quickly took another. Within minutes my legs were saying, 'Come on, we can do this!'

I knew at this point I could still finish under five hours providing I maintained this good pace. That said, by the end, it felt like I was running quickly, but the wrong way on a traveller! As I reached the finish line, someone tapped me on the back and said, 'Yeah, mountain rescue, fancy seeing you here!' I turned to see a supporter from Glossop and we crossed the line together. It felt so good to get over the line and receive my medal.

...cacophonous cheering from thousands of well-wishers, intermingled with music soundtrack from multiple genres and the frankly sinister St John Ambulance volunteers holding out hands thickly loaded with Vaseline (nipple burn being the most feared complication of marathon running). John Ealing

JOHN EALING

Apart from eating chocolate, there are good and bad aspects to most of life. Running the London Marathon is no exception: a twelve week training schedule of over around 500 miles at varying pace/duration in the cold of a Lancashire spring, the fatigue and blackened toenails. The good side? Raising money for MREW (>£2200 so far). So a huge thank you to all that contributed.



Race day dawned cool but dry and, as we congregated at Greenwich, it was apparent the event was exceptionally well organised. The whole run was accompanied by cacophonous cheering from thousands of well-wishers, intermingled with music soundtrack from multiple genres and the frankly sinister St John Ambulance volunteers holding out hands thickly loaded with Vaseline, nipple burn being the most feared complication of marathon running. At my target pace, this was no sight-seeing trip. I barely noticed all the landmarks I apparently passed, although I do recall the time on Tower Bridge (only because it's the steepest part of the undulating course and just before the half-way mark). As a ran along Embankment the Houses of Parliament came into view and slowly, so slowly, got closer before the right turn into the final stretch. By that time, cramp accompanied every stride and I realised that although I'd miss my sub 3:10 goal, the end (in every way) was tantalisingly close. As I neared the finish line my calf muscles were contorting and I had some thing of a religious experience, overtaken by a man dressed as a nun (something I don't wish to make a habit of). However, I made the man dressed as a postbox look decidedly second class as I was already trussed up in foil blankets and guzzling sports drink as he crossed the line. After four days of purgatory recovering, you might ask whether I would submit myself to such torture again? The answer is 'Yes'; I've already put my name down for next year's entry ballot.

#itsoktotalk



ANDY ELWOOD
CHATS ABOUT
MENTAL HEALTH,
LANDIES AND
STAYING WONKY

The road trip begins...

It's been a very busy couple of months for me, but I have now completed my Mental Health First Aid instructor training, delivered my first course with great feedback and completed presentations in workplaces for Mental Health Awareness week, including University of Cambridge School of Medicine.

I've also been fortunate enough to write guest blogs for College of Paramedics, Air and Rescue Magazine, Crisis Response Journal and completed two podcasts. All part of the plan to get the message out there that #itsoktotalk

As I write this, I'm making final preparations for my Wellbeing road trip around Scotland (18 June – 5 July), to promote the UKSAR Wellbeing and Resilience Framework.

I have definitely been out of my comfort zone (but that's where all the magic happens, isn't it?) as I've had electrical problems on the Landie, my least favourite system to sort out on the vehicle. Not quite the wiggly amps of the old Sea King but complicated nonetheless, for my small brain. I knew there was some kind of issue as the headlights would stop working sometimes, but I ignored the issue for a long time, as I didn't drive the vehicle in the dark. But when the brake, side and dash lights stopped completely, I realised I had to sort it out.

This is so typical of men not going to the doctor for physical health issues, but even more so for mental health issues, which we bottle up and think we can solve ourselves or ignore and they will go away.

So, I dismantled the dashboard and pulled all the electrics out and replaced all the connections I could find. Labelling was key and taking plenty of photographs helped too. When I put it all back together, with fresh earths on the body, everything seemed much more fresh, reliable and crisp for better electrical connections, starting with a new switch after I broke the old one, during removal.

However, my indicators were not reliable. Sometimes the right one stopped working entirely and on a few drives I was reduced to hand signals in order to get home. This simply wouldn't do for my two-week trip around Scotland and northern England.

More fault diagnosis led to me replace the indicator stalk switch gear and finding a poor connection under the bonnet which, when replaced, gave me a fully functioning system again! That is where the pleasure is with this hobby/ therapy — keeping my mind busy and having something to think about rather than my mind festering and spiralling round and round on things I can't change, in world news or in my own life. The satisfaction of

renewing a system within the vehicle, so it works as intended, is fantastic and gives me a real buzz. I am starting to know my way around a lot more from sorting out problems as I come across them.

My other main problem has been occasional lack of fuel flow causing engine cut out. This had tended to happen only when the vehicle was idling or parked in a nose uphill attitude. However, when it happened driving up a steep hill recently, I finally decided I needed to do something about it. I'd already replaced the fuel filter and fuel pump on the engine in an attempt to address the issue without success. Now it was time to go deeper into the system.

I drained the petrol from the tank and removed the uplift pipe and found three pieces of silicone in my tank, which seemed in good condition otherwise. These were incredibly difficult to remove — I tried stabbing them, coaxing them to the drain hole and finally I removed one of them. When I asked my trusted garage for advice, Pete chuckled and advised me to try hoovering them out. My old 'Henry' hoover solved my problem in seconds and I wished I'd thought of that myself the previous day to save a couple of hours in awkward positions with a torch and even enlisting my wife's help to achieve 1/3 success.

This is a lot like life in a way — we struggle on trying to solve our own problems alone, not wanting to admit we have a problem. We accept the struggle and drain on our time, when all we had to do was to chat to someone and the answer was there — simple, because someone else had been there before us and had exactly the same problem. Finding the right person to ask is often half the battle.

Men are particularly bad at letting things run on and hoping the issue will either go away, fix itself or that they will sort it themselves in the long run. Statistics show that men are more likely to self-medicate and turn to substance abuse to 'cope' with a mental health issue in their lives. So, over time, there's a build-up of pressure and — because men feel they have to hide any sign of weakness or vulnerability — when this is released, the results are often violent and catastrophic. This is one of the reasons that 75% of suicides in the UK are men. 20% of the population have suicidal thoughts at some time in



Left: Stuck in the mud at the National Rally.

life, but they are temporary, and they pass. Finding connections and support through friends is very important after professional help. Together these are the way forward to survive the storm and find a new calm/ outlook on life. It's a common myth that someone talking about suicide won't go through with it — this is actually a clear warning sign that they are having serious difficulties and is a real chance to intervene and help. Taking a Mental Health First Aid course is one way of increasing your knowledge and confidence of spotting someone in difficulty, and assisting someone in a crisis. You could save the life of a colleague or loved one, as well as casualties on the hill.

Stopping and acknowledging I had a fuel problem was key to me sorting it out. I took the system apart and found what the real issue was, so it could be sorted properly. Asking for help earlier would have saved me a lot of time and trouble. This is so like me realising that I had burn-out last year. When I finally decided to talk to someone and said out loud that I hadn't been sleeping well for two to three years, it sounded so obvious to me that I had an issue and that I should have done something about it sooner. Sound familiar? A great place to start is talking to a trusted friend or your GP and most people report that they were surprised how supportive friends and colleagues were when problems have been shared. Mind Blue Light reported this too earlier this year.

Recently I have also had to replace the starter motor with a refurbished one, after delivering an 'emergency' jar of marmalade to my father-in-law. (It's a long story). Luckily, I was on a hill and able to bump start myself to get home. I found a local bloke, who actually fixes and repairs them, rather than throwing the old one away and buying a new cheaper inferior replacement from China. My starter had a ceased cog so wasn't able to slip forward onto the starter ring on the engine.

deeper water hazards than I had ever been through before. It was fantastic to meet new people with similar interests and ask lots of questions to keep learning about my own vehicle, especially for my trip.

I'm also learning about film making for this trip, after getting myself on a BBC training day a while ago, which included how to make a film on your mobile phone. I have challenged myself to make a short film about my trip around MR teams and other 999



Finding my way round the vehicle: Getting to grips with the rear diff oil seal and the wonders of wiring. All photos © Andy Elwood.



Breakfast on the road: Shades of travels to come on the road trip.

I had a successful test weekend to Land Rover National rally 100 miles from home and sorted camping gear, stove and what spares and tools I would take with me for my longer journey to Scotland. I even tried the off-road course at Sibbertoft. The old girl was outstanding over all sorts of obstacles, hills and wading through

services from the Peak District to Scotland. I have sought advice and have now bought the equipment I require to make a film with you guys about what it's like to work in the emergency services and saving lives whilst also balancing this with a healthy home and work life.

I'll be asking guests in Andy's Landie,

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Left to right: Wiring before and after. So much neater. All photos © Andy Elwood.

as I travel, what helps men talk about their feelings. When they choose to talk, what reaction they get and how talking has helped them re-evaluate their position/thoughts and to find a way forward with some support, patience and time.

If you'd like to contribute to this film, please get in touch via chinwag@andyelwood.com. There may be a chance to do so at the Emergency Services Show at the NEC in September as the Land Rover will have a stand next to the Wellbeing theatre. Why not drop in and say hi or come to hear me speak there on Wednesday 18 September?

Doing something new or making time to do something you already enjoy but have neglected is also a great way to have positive mental health, for me film making is it for now — it has added a whole other layer to my trip. I've found that being creative and sketching ideas for my training courses and business really is therapeutic and helps me think clearer and freer. It's well documented that being creative helps low mood

and depression, and is a great way to feel better about yourself, as well as being active, giving and taking notice. Many of these are covered by being a mountain rescue volunteer and although your involvement in MR may carry potential hazards of 'traumatic incidents', overall the role brings so much fulfilment and purpose to volunteers' lives that the benefits far outweigh the risks. #staysafestaywell

This is recognised by the UKSAR framework for Wellbeing and Mental Health. Have a look for yourself and have a think how you can introduce this into your team? Maybe put a copy on your noticeboard, email your team, have a short session on the subject at your next training event. Have you seen the tailored team template, which can be amended with your team details etc, developed from a successful programme in New Zealand volunteer firefighters? Contact SMR Wellbeing Officer, Steve Penny for more details.

Until next time, stay wonky and remember #itsoktotalk. ☺



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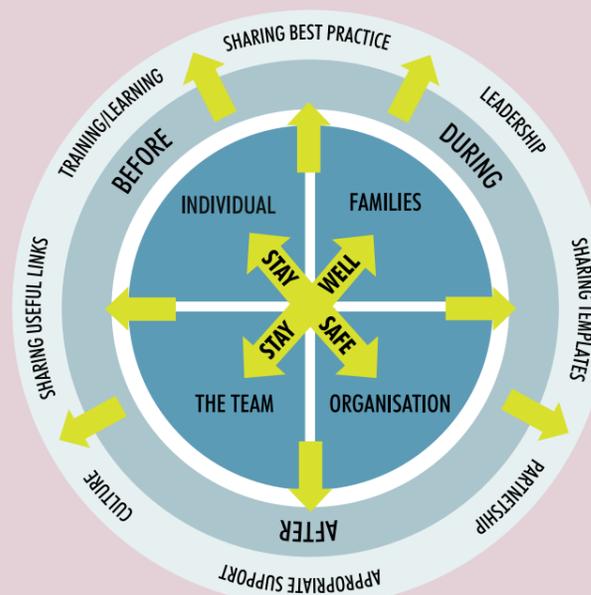
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I haven't climbed Mount Everest, and right now, I don't want to.



The iconic photo of the queue on Everest © Nimsdai (Nirmal Purja MBE) Project Possible. Published here with kind permission.

Why? For starters, I don't consider myself a mountaineer. I've trekked up a few mountains, don't get me wrong, and even walked the length of the Himalayas for six months, but for the most part I stuck to the paths, valleys and high passes, leaving the peaks to the experts.

Another reason why I have no desire to climb the infamous peak is that I don't like queues. And these days it seems that there's a lot of queuing going on.

I visited my friend Nims Purja a few weeks ago at Annapurna base camp, half way up the mountain and chatted to him about his 'Project Possible' mission to climb the fourteen highest peaks in the world in just one season — the current record is just shy of eight years!

Bonkers you might think, but unlike me, Nims is a professional mountaineer and proper climber with several world speed records under his belt.

Despite the eye watering sums of money that it costs to climb Everest, not to mention the obvious risks, there is no sign of demand ceasing. The Nepal government issued 44 permits this year (through which 381 climbers were permitted to climb Everest in Spring 2019) and, with a narrow climbing window, it's clear that unless something is done, people will continue to cram themselves up as soon as the weather clears and offers the opportunity.



LEVISON WOOD

The former SBS operator gave up his distinguished military career to undertake what will be probably the most impressive feat of mountaineering in history. 'What's the biggest danger?' I asked him. He smiled and replied. 'Other people'.

He's referring of course to the inexperienced hordes of tourists that pay extortionate amounts to outfitters to drag them up mountains for the glory of getting to the top.

Now I'm not saying that there's anything wrong with wanting to scale the roof of the world, and far be it from me to put others off going on their own adventures and fulfilling their dreams. But Everest has already claimed the lives of eleven people this season and no doubt there will be more tragedy to come.

Nims' now famous photograph of the enormous queue to get to the top of our planet's highest mountain clearly shows the enormity of the problem.

He had to wait patiently for four hours in the 'death zone' before his turn came to reach the summit and he told me of all his challenges so far, standing still in those freezing temperatures was a real low.

What's more, when ill-prepared climbers succumb to exposure it puts everyone else at risk as rescue parties must put their own lives on the line. Nims has already saved several lives in his own impromptu rescues, but he admits that it's taken a huge toll on his own climbing and he's seen far too much death as a result.

The problem is that of scale.

What then is the answer? Nims reckons the season could be extended by a week or so, and the Sherpas could fix the ropes earlier. Climate change has already warmed up the mountain significantly in recent years meaning it might be possible to spread the climbers out a bit.

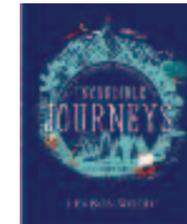
Ben Fogle, who summited the mountain last year, recently made a convincing plea for a lottery-style system whereupon numbers would be limited to a hundred or so, rather than the 800 who summited in 2018.

There are other ways, like making sure climbers are fully prepared by insisting on a certain level of experience and ability. For example, climbers must show evidence

that they have already climbed another 8000-metre peak. That would certainly help reduce the problem, and make it a safer mountain.

There are plenty of other mountains out there, lots more beautiful ones, harder ones, even unclimbed ones. If you really want to queue, try living in London and take the tube, or else have a bit of imagination and go for another peak. Either way it's worth remembering what Edmund Hillary said: 'It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves... Human life is far more important than just getting to the top of a mountain.' 🧗

This piece was originally published by Metro.co.uk.



LEVISON WOOD IS A BRITISH EXPLORER, WRITER, FILMMAKER AND PHOTOGRAPHER. IN HIS LATEST BOOK, INCREDIBLE JOURNEYS – AIMED AT YOUNGER READERS – HE TRAVELS THE WORLD, MEETING SOME OF HISTORY'S MOST DARING PIONEERS. IN 20 EPIC EXPEDITIONS – NOW AVAILABLE IN THE MREW SHOP PRICE £14.99



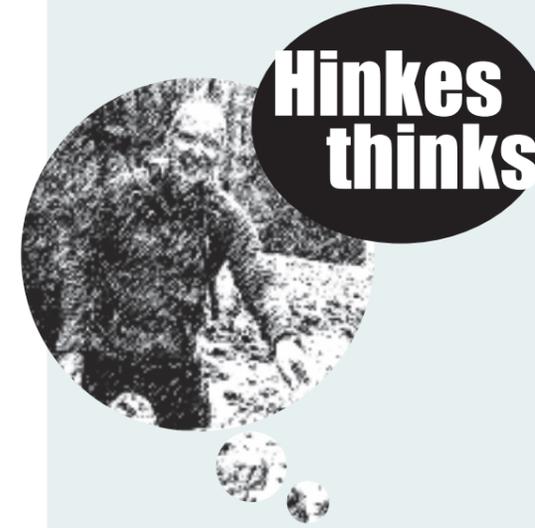
Nirmal 'Nims' Purja, the man responsible for that now iconic image has set himself a challenging goal: To climb all fourteen of the 8,000 metre Himalayan peaks in a single seven-month season, breaking the previous record of seven years, eleven months and fourteen days.

As his website says, 'you may not have heard of Nims before — and there is a very good reason for that. He has spent the last sixteen years serving in the UK military, ten of which were in the secretive world of the UK's Special Forces'. But now out of the military he is free to pursue his mountaineering dream.

He's an extraordinary mountaineer who, because of his physiology, training, mindset and sheer humanity, is capable of achieving things beyond even the most experienced climber and already boasts an impressive list of achievements, including orchestrating the gruelling rescue of a stricken Indian climber, who succumbed to cold weather injuries in the Everest 'Death Zone'. The climber made a full recovery. During the G200E Gurkha Expedition, that took thirteen Gurkhas to the top of Everest, he was lead instructor and also helped fix rope lines to the summit. The original fixing team missed multiple windows due to bad weather so Nims formed a team to take care of this essential work.

He also holds three Guinness World Records: the fastest time ever from the summit of Everest to the summit of Lhotse (10 hours 15 minutes), beating the previous record of 20 hours; the fastest consecutive summits of Everest, Lhotse and Makalu (higher 8000m peaks) over five days; and the first person to summit Everest twice, Lhotse once and Makalu once, in the same season, over just seventeen days.

Find out more at projectpossible.co.uk or check out his GoFundMe campaign, which aims to raise £300,000 at gofundme.com/147-power-of-possible. Good luck Nims!



Tragedy in the Himalaya

It was a bad year, this last winter, for accidents and deaths in the British hills and now it's been a tragic season in the Himalaya. Everest was in the mainstream media with Nims Purja's emotive, headline-grabbing image of 200 climbers queuing along the final summit ridge to the top and the news of eleven deaths. As usual neither the media nor the public really understand why we climb and it's hard to justify when people are killed.

The photo of 200 people near the summit of Everest was an anomaly. There would not have been 200 the day before or the day after. From 1 June until probably next year, April 2020, there will be no one on Everest, it will be empty.

There would have been several hundred people attempting Everest this year and only a handful of days when it is possible to summit. Most of the time it is too cold, too windy (the Jetstream can roar at 200 km per hour over the summit), or too avalanche prone. On those rare few days a lot of the people are going to push for the top. Nevertheless, hanging around in a queue at over 8000 metres is not a good idea. That altitude is known as

the Death Zone for good reason. Humans can only live for a matter of hours, there's no chance of a helicopter rescue, as 6500 metres is the highest practicable and there are no mountain rescue teams. If there were it would take three weeks at least to acclimatise and be extremely risky to hang around facilitating a rescue. The only chance of help is from other climbers if you are 'walking wounded'. Anyone who is immobile has very little chance of rescue.

Sadly, the queue probably did contribute to a couple of the deaths and no doubt some frostbite. But people die on Everest every year even when there is no queue.

Other 8000-metre peaks sadly had their share of drama and death this year and Nirmal 'Nims' Purja has made a couple of high altitude rescues. Nims is very well acclimatised and superbly fit, but going back up an 8000-metre peak to help rescue a stricken climber will still be putting himself in extreme danger in the death zone. It will also weaken him and eat into his time schedule to top out on all fourteen 8000ers.

Selflessly, he has already rescued a couple of climbers this season. It's what true mountaineers do — if you are capable of rescuing another human, you will try.

I have also had similar incidents on big mountains. I had to turn back from a K2 summit attempt to help a fellow climber down from another team. It took several days to get him down to BC. Sadly his partner had already died descending from the summit. We saved his life, but he did contract frostbite and had three toes amputated. As is often the case, most incidents, even on Himalayan peaks, happen on the descent or later in the day when people are tired or let their

guard down. Complacency is a killer and you must pay attention to every step, move or clip into a karabiner. Sometimes even the best can be unlucky. We have to accept that mountaineering does have its inherent dangers otherwise we might prefer to play golf or tennis.

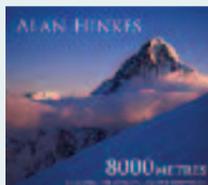
The team of eight avalanched near Nanda Devi in the Indian Himalaya were tragically unlucky. Led by British Mountain Guide Martin Moran the risk would have been minimised. Martin was

one of the most experienced and meticulously prepared mountain leaders. He would have considered all the scenarios. But the mountains don't know you may be an avalanche expert and can be cruel when you least expect it.

When we lose friends in the mountains it makes us reassess our love for the hills, but we go back, drawn by their lure and charm. Psychologists may call it cognitive dissonance. I'd like to think it's a mutual respect and understanding. I feel at home in the hills and mountains. ☺



Above: Alan on the summit of Everest in 1996 © Alan Hinkes.



ALAN HINKES IS THE FIRST BRITON TO CLIMB THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS, THE FOURTEEN 8000M PEAKS. HE IS ALSO A KEEN ADVOCATE FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE. HIS BOOK ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE, '8000 METRES' IS AVAILABLE IN THE MREW SHOP



Above: The Nanda Devi region of the Indian Himalaya © Moran Mountain.

The Moran family issued an official statement on 2 June

We are deeply saddened by the tragic events unfolding in the Nanda Devi region of the Indian Himalaya. As a family, we share the same emotions that all next of kin are experiencing in not knowing the whereabouts or wellbeing of those closest to us. We are grateful to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation who are coordinating search and rescue efforts on the ground and in the air under extremely difficult conditions in a very remote area of the Himalaya.

The climbing group had set out to attempt an unclimbed, unnamed summit, Peak 6477m, and the last contact intimated that all was well and a summit bid would be made from a camp at around 5400m. It is not entirely clear what happened from this point onwards or indeed the timeline of events. We do know that a British Mountain Guide who was in the area leading a trekking group, as part of the same expedition, was informed that the climbing group had not returned to basecamp as expected. He immediately went on the mountain to search for the missing climbers. There was clear evidence that a sizeable avalanche had occurred on the mountain and it seemed to be on or very near the route that would be taken by the climbing group. The Mountain Guide gave instructions to base camp to alert rescue authorities. The alarm was raised early on Friday morning 31 May. Today we have been informed by the Indian Mountaineering Federation that an air search by helicopter has revealed the scale of the avalanche but no sign of the climbers, their equipment nor their tents. We are pressing for the search area to be widened and continued until such time as firm evidence is found to ascertain the wellbeing or otherwise of all those in the climbing group.

We are grateful for all the support that has been offered to us and we will be sure to release any information as and when we receive it. In the meantime please respect the privacy that the next of kin of the climbers need as they seek solace at this harrowing time.

Postscript: At the time of going to press, the Indian authorities were continuing in their efforts to recover the missing climbers.

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PLEASE NOTE: THIS BOOK IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE IN HARD COPY

TEAM TALK SPRING



MAY: NORTH WEST LIONS CLUBS SUPPORT MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAMS WITH WATER INCIDENT TRAILERS

Following the Storm Desmond floods of 2015, the Lions Clubs North West District contacted LDSAMRA to help fund equipment in anticipation of future flooding, wanting to support teams in both Lancashire and Cumbria.

The result was the provision of two identical water incident trailers, fully stocked, each costing £30,000. The trailers have been in use over the past several months, primarily for training purposes, ready for when the need arises. Based in central locations in Cumbria and Lancashire for major flooding incident responses, they are available to all the teams. In May, a 'project completion' event took place on the River Leven at Backarow (Newby Bridge), attended by senior representatives from the Lions North West District, and joint teams of swiftwater rescue technicians from Cockermouth, Langdale Ambleside, Kendal and Bowland Pennine.



JUNE: QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUERS

This year's birthday honours list included an MBE for Mike France, MREW chairman.

Mike has been a member of mountain rescue for almost fifty years, having joined Woodhead Mountain Rescue Team in 1970 and subsequently taken up roles as party leader, team leader and regional incident controller — a job he continues to do today. He took on the role of chairman of Mountain Rescue England and Wales in May 2014.

'I feel genuinely honoured and humbled to receive this award,' says Mike. 'As a mountain rescuer you are used and committed to turning out as and when required in order to help others. To have that work recognised like this is a real honour — not just for me but for all mountain rescuers who selflessly turn out when everyone else is going home'.

Mike joins a growing list of mountain rescuers honoured for their vital work in the community.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, founder team member of Galloway MRT, Ken McCubbin, was awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to mountain rescue.

Top left: Mike France © Woodhead MRT. Bottom left: Ken McCubbin © Galloway MRT.



FEBRUARY: CALDER VALLEY LONG SERVICE AWARDS

The three Calder Valley team stalwarts, Wayne Ogden, Martin Woodhead and Clive Green, received their awards from Chief Superintendent Whitehead, West Yorkshire Police Calderdale District Commander.

Clive, with 50 years of service, is the longest serving member of the team ever, having joined not long after its formation in 1966. He played a major role in the project to construct the team base in Mytholmroyd, 25 years ago, and served as assistant leader for five years until 2018. Wayne and Martin have both served 40 years — a landmark only three other team members have reached. Both joined from the Scouts. Wayne has fulfilled a number of roles including assistant leader and vehicles officer. Martin has served as both deputy and assistant team leader and treasurer.

The team would like to take this opportunity to thank them 'for their commitment to the team and being instrumental in its development over the decades. The experience they bring to the team is second to none'.

Above: Left to right: Chief Superintendent Whitehead, Wayne Ogden, Martin Woodhead, Clive Green © CVSRT.



DAN SELLS KINDER MRT 1981–2019

Dan Sells was a much-loved member of the Kinder team and a trainee search dog handler with Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England with his two-year-old golden retriever, Maya – who he fondly referred

to as 'the ginger princess' (along with a few more colourful descriptions on occasion). On behalf of the team, **Mike Potts** looks back on Dan's 38 years of life.

Having grown up in North Wales, Dan discovered the joys of exploring the hills as an undergraduate at Manchester University, where he subsequently worked as a lab technician. More recently, he worked as a self-employed dog walker and, on hearing of his death, his clients express their affection for him on social media, praising him for always being willing to go the extra mile for them.

A member of the team since 2012, Dan was affectionately referred to as 'broken Dan', partly to distinguish him from the other Dans in the team, but principally due to his propensity to injure himself. Often proudly sporting the latest in arm sling or leg plaster-cast chic, he was an active member of the team and search dog community. His involvement as a dog's body with SARDA led to his involvement in that arena and he frequently helped out at the Crowden Weekend, PDMRO's Foundation Course for new MR members, where he made many a friend from MR teams across the country.

Typical of Dan's generosity he recently set up a JustGiving page to raise funds for expensive double cruciate ligament operation for his friend Nick Shepherd's nine-year old search dog, Dolly. The fund raised more than £8,000 in five days. At the time, Nick was quoted as saying 'I am utterly blown away by the support from everyone. [Dolly] was always going to have the operation but I'd made peace with the fact and told the children we just wouldn't be having a big holiday this year. To have the money raised by people who have never even met her is so touching and the comments have been so supportive, with everyone wishing her well.'

His out-of-team exploits included summer and winter climbing, both in the UK and overseas and, in true Dan fashion, these adventures were often the source of tales of 'epics' and comic misadventures amongst his friends.

He touched a great many people's lives and this was evident at his funeral in St Asaph, which was attended by a significant contingent of friends and MR colleagues, including most of the currently active search dogs in England, who formed a guard of honour as he was brought to the crematorium.

Maya has now been adopted by his friend Nick who is continuing Maya's training. We hear good reports.

Dan leaves behind a brother and father who still live in North Wales. He will be sorely missed by all those who knew him and, so, from all your friends in the team and across the SAR community, 'Stand down Dan. Gone but never forgotten'. ❖

Top: Dan with Maya at a PDMRO Training Weekend at Crowden © PDMRO.

ANDREW GREENWOOD BOWLAND PENNINE MRT 1958–2019

A particularly virulent form of cancer robbed the Bowland Pennine team of one of its most active members and our thoughts are with his partner, Jane and family, writes **Tim Cox**. Over 50 team members and representatives from the other MPSRO teams formed a guard of honour at Preston Crem to give him the send-off he so richly deserved.

Andrew's radio call-sign, Trough Bravo 5, was appropriate: 'Trough', after the Trough of Bowland, as Andrew had acquired the nickname of the Squire of Bowland within the team, and 'Bravo' neatly sums up his almost schoolboy enthusiasm and humour in everything he participated in.

Andrew had been in the team for just six years and made a very quick, significant and invaluable contribution. As Head Ranger, he had a detailed knowledge of our upland landscape and knew the landowners and farmers in the area so very soon took on the responsibility of team access officer, gaining permission for us to train on land previously excluded to us. He brought the kudos and friendliness we needed and we readily accepted his vast experience.

A 4x4 owner, he had a keen knowledge and interest in their capabilities including how to drive them safely off-road and was able to pass on his skills as a regional off-road driving instructor. He was also appointed vehicle officer responsible for keeping our fleet of six vehicles on the road.



Always up for a challenge, Andrew attended everything he was available for: fell race cover, helicopter training, PPE courses and he was also a regional TRiM assessor. He was a glass half-full sort of a guy, always a smile on his face, sometimes cheekily giggly, reliable and dependable. If he said he would do something then rest assured it would be done. Andrew was an exemplary team player and an example to us all.

On retirement, he didn't sit back and take it easy but threw himself into mountain

rescue, committing himself 100% to every aspect of the team from call-outs and training to fundraising and education through talks and visits.

A gentle giant who will be sorely missed by everyone, he had given so much and had so much more to give. Although I'm sure we will eventually be able to find people to take on his various roles, I'm equally sure it will take more than just one person to fill his boots. Trough Bravo 5 — you can stand down now, Trough Bravo 5 out. ❖

Based on the tribute given by Kevin Camplin (TL BPMRT) at Andrew's funeral service.



JUNE: COCKERMOUTH TEAM MEMBERS MARK SIGNIFICANT DATE IN THEIR TEAM'S HISTORY

Team members past and present, along with relatives, friends and trainee search dogs, gathered at Gatesgarth in Buttermere, on 15 June, for a memorial service to remember the tragic accident, fifty years before, at Low Crag, where two team members tragically lost their lives. A short remembrance service at the crag was followed by the laying of a wreath in memory of John 'Jock' Thomson and Michael Stephenson.



In June 1969, Cockermouth team members were practising a new technique of horizontal stretcher lower at Low Crag above Gatesgarth, Buttermere. One lower had been successfully completed but, on the second, a huge rock, which was holding the main belay, broke away causing a substantial rock fall which engulfed the stretcher and several of the members.

Jock Thompson, the team leader, who was acting as one of the barrowboys, was struck by the boulder and killed instantly. Jim Coyle, the other barrowboy, suffered a broken arm and cracked ribs. One of the two belay members, Michael Stephenson, was catapulted out onto the scree below and died in hospital from his injuries, the following day. Kathryn Wilson, the other main belay person, was carried down the crag, resulting in a broken arm and a broken pelvis. Rex Usher, acting as the casualty on the stretcher, was buried under the debris. He suffered cracked ribs and severe bruising. Several other team members suffered more minor injuries such as rope burns.

The accident had a profound effect on a very young team and it remains probably the most serious accident to have occurred in mountain rescue in Britain. 'There was a general feeling that we wanted to pack it in,' recalls Jim Coyle. 'You've got to remember, we were young lads. We'd never had to face anything like this before.'

Far from packing it in, however, the 27-year-old Jim himself bravely took up the mantle of team leader, a post he held for 38 years. It was to his credit that the team developed from such a low point to become recognised as one of the core Lakes teams. During his time as leader, he also helped establish the Search and Rescue Dogs Association in England, with his first dog, Rock, gaining the coveted 'C' grade — at the time there were only two other handlers at this high standard in the country.

Top: Flowers from the team in memory of those who died; older team members gathered to remember the friend they lost. Left to right: Maurice Anderson, Frank Rushton, John Bulman, Keith Lister, Peter Coyle, Neil Pritt, Ian Dixon, Jim Coyle and Tony Daley.

Below: Team members, friends and family gather round the memorial plaque for Jack Thomson and Michael Stephenson. Photos © Cockermouth MRT.





MOUNTAIN AND CAVE RESCUE, TOGETHER NOW OVER EIGHTY YEARS

BILL WHITEHOUSE

I have been part of BCRC and MREW for a very long time, working hard for both organisations and I have to confess to being somewhat uneasy as MREW morphs towards incorporated status. In principle, becoming a CIO makes a lot of sense. I recall most – if not all – the voting members being in favour of the concept when it was first seriously mooted. But the process seems to have picked up a lot of unforeseen baggage along the way, that has little to do with becoming a CIO. I sincerely hope that what results will be a democratic and sympathetic national body that will provide the kind of support and representation that its members want. If not then the new MREW could easily become a monster trying to devour its own reluctant children.

I am saddened that, as part of the change, cave rescue appears to be on the cusp of becoming disenfranchised associate members of MREW — after 84 years of close working relationships at local, regional and national levels, tackling so many problems together, in so many areas of mutual interest and concern. Surely we should be striving to continue working together, not moving apart?

I know many find the relationship between mountain and cave rescue difficult to understand and I've often been asked why cave rescue is part of MREW when BCRC is a separate body and charity. The simple answer is that cave rescue has always been a part of what we now know as 'MREW' and, as for the body and charity bit, all members of MREW are separate bodies and charities

The long road to 2019

How, you might ask, has cave rescue been there from the start? Surely we've always been about the mountains? Any history of mountain rescue invariably begins with the reliance on ad hoc groups of friends, local volunteers and the police when anyone got into trouble above or below ground. With the formation of the Joint Stretcher Committee in 1933, the Rucksack Club and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club joined forces to produce a better means of carrying a casualty than the five bar gate of legend. The result, in 1935, was the Thomas stretcher and one of these, with other rescue kit, was placed in key spots for use as needed by the still ad hoc rescue teams. That same year saw the formation of the

Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO), in the Yorkshire Dales, because cavers realised that rescues from the increasingly deeper, longer and more challenging caves being explored required skills and knowledge possessed only by experienced cavers. CRO is now one of the dual role mountain and cave teams but, until the early 1960s all its work was underground.

In 1936 a second team, the Mendip Rescue Organization (now Mendip Cave Rescue) was formed in Somerset. Also that year, the Joint Stretcher Committee became the First Aid Committee of British Mountaineering Clubs and its membership quickly grew to nine clubs (at least four of them including caving among their activities), the YHA, the Ramblers association, some university clubs and the Cave Rescue Organisation. The resources of the expanded committee enabled the establishment of many additional posts.

In 1946, the committee took ownership of the rescue posts and changed its name to the Mountain Rescue Committee (MRC). Most posts were stocked purely for surface work but, in areas where there was a need, specialist underground kit was also included. 1946 also saw the formation of a third cave rescue team in South Wales and the first mountain rescue team (Coniston MRT) in the Lake District.

In 1949 Wilson Hey won a long battle with the government for permission to stock rescue posts with morphine and the Ministry of Health undertook, via the NHS, to supply basic equipment to the posts. By 1950, the MRC was a registered charity, primarily focused on equipping the posts. By then, excluding the RAF teams formed during the

war, there were about ten volunteer rescue teams in England and Wales — half mountain rescue teams in the Lake District and half predominantly cave teams, elsewhere in the country.

One of the latter was the Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Association (UWFRA), formed in 1948 'to help people or animals in distress either on or under the hills and fells of the Yorkshire Dales'.

By 1960 the number of rescue teams in England and Wales had risen to a dozen. Seven were mountain rescue, four were cave teams and one (UWFRA) was dual role. The only team belonging to the MRC as a voting member was still the CRO.

The 1960s saw a huge increase in teams, the beginnings of regional organisations and the breakaway of the Scottish teams. The 1969 edition of the MRC handbook records forty teams including six cave and three dual role. It also records the existence of six regional organisations. Still, except for CRO, all were non-voting affiliates to the MRC.

The Cave Rescue Council (CRC), the forerunner of BCRC, took shape in 1967 but it had its origins in 1959 in the aftermath of the tragic death of Neil Moss in Peak Cavern in Derbyshire (MR magazine Issue 68). The incident involved cave rescuers from all over the country and led to the conclusion that a specialist national body was needed to bring about better liaison between teams who



Above: The search for three Rover Scouts missing during the Four Inns Walk in 1964. The group includes Derbyshire CRO members. DCRO later helped with the recovery of one of the bodies. Photo courtesy of Bill Whitehouse.

operated underground. At the time of the incident there had been five cave rescue teams but by 1967 there were eleven, including one in Scotland and one in Ireland.

The new council's remit was twofold. First, to operate across the British Isles and liaise between teams at home and abroad, and ensure that a cave rescue service existed where one was needed, sharing good practice and promoting awareness. Second, to be active within the MRC for the benefit of both mountain and cave rescue whilst also representing the specific interests of cave teams, in the same way that MRC regions represented the interests of local mountain rescue teams.

Far from any division or falling out between mountain and cave rescue, the formation of this new council addressed the emerging need that cave rescue should have a specialist body, working as part of or parallel with the MRC on issues of mutual interest and concern, and outside of it on issues relevant only to cave rescue.

By the mid-1970s the number of teams had risen further. The 1974 handbook lists 60, of whom eleven were entirely or partly involved in cave rescue. It also recorded that the MRC maintained 51 rescue posts,

mostly under the local management of a mountain or cave rescue team. Since then teams have come, gone, merged or changed their names and the total is currently 57 with 44 'pure' mountain, nine 'pure' cave and four dual role.

In 1977, the now eight regions and the Cave Rescue Council became voting members. The CRO surrendered its own direct membership and the CRC took over representation on the MRC for cave rescue issues. For the mountain rescue bit of their work, the three dual role teams in the Dales were represented by the Yorkshire Dales Rescue Panel.

All change again...

In 1987 the MRC reorganised again and the votes of regions and the CRC (now BCRC) were increased to two each. According to the 1994 Handbook 'each team, through its regional body is affiliated

to the national Mountain Rescue Council'. And 'in areas with caves and mines, specialist teams under the auspices of the British Cave Rescue Council have been established, they too are affiliated to the MRC as there are many areas of common interest, for example in equipment and medical matters'. Fairly explicit.

In 1998 a further reorganisation slimmed down voting membership removing the remaining clubs and most other organisations and leaving only regions, BCRC, national officers (twelve at the time), SARDA, ACPO and the MoD with votes.

In 2009 the MRC became Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and underwent yet another reorganisation making all mountain and cave rescue teams voting members whilst reducing the votes of the regions and BCRC from two to one.

Since 2006, the chairman of the BCRC had been serving by invitation on the MREW management committee to improve

* **Disclaimer:** Any views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of any organisation I belong to.



DON ROBINSON UWFRA 1952–2019

Don passed away in April, in Threshfield Court Care Home, Grassington, aged 91, after a brave four-year fight against the debilitating, idiopathic

pulmonary fibrosis affecting his lungs. Peter Huff had known him since he himself was five, when Don was a good friend of his dad, Len, and a frequent visitor to the Huff household, to chat about the outdoors and the Upper Wharfedale team, of which he became a member in 1950.

He had moved into the area to take up a teaching post at Linton Camp School in 1948 until 1952, when he was seconded to the Prince Rupert School, Willenshaven, Germany, a school for children of officers of the British Army of the Rhine, where he taught metalwork.

On his return to Linton in 1956 he became an assistant pothole leader, then pothole leader. Initially the team's equipment was mainly ex-army with 'make do and mend'. In the late 1950s new caves and potholes were discovered bringing new challenges on the rescue scene. Don realised that specialist equipment was needed, and he designed the expanding stemple, the steel frame with fibreglass helmet for the Neil Robertson underground stretcher, and the underground exposure bag, all still in use today. He also understood the problems of rescuing an unconscious caver through a water-filled passage. The team purchased a full-face mask underwater breathing apparatus and Don organised the training.

He presented his exposure bag at the 1965 caving conference in Derbyshire (Potholers' Parliament) to a lukewarm reception. However, that was to change when he and UWFRA helped rescue 24-year-old Donna Carr from Giants' Hole in Derbyshire. The girl had become stuck while strapped to the stretcher of the local rescue group, during what turned out to be the longest rescue on record so, in his normal decisive manner, Don cut her out of the stretcher, installed her in the survival bag and she was returned to the surface after more

than 24 hours underground. Dr Hugh Kidd, who led the Derbyshire team in the marathon rescue, said there was 'no question about it — her life was saved by the bag'. At the 1966 Potholers' Parliament in Grassington a demonstration of the bag which had now received national acclaim was the highlight of the conference. He was still involved with the team until 1967 when he was made a life member.

Whilst at Linton, Don organised teacher training courses for Bradford PE teachers who needed skills in outdoor education. This resulted in him taking a further year out between to complete an Advanced PE course at Carnegie College, to be on a par with his mature students. In 1964, he was appointed to the PE Department at the University of Leeds where he was to organise a Post Graduate Certificate in Education Outdoor Activities module, and advise the various clubs and groups in the students' union to ensure their activities were safe. It was during this time he developed the two university huts, one at Selside

near Horton in Ribblesdale and one in the Duddon Valley. In his early days at the university he built what is widely considered to be the world's first climbing wall. On his retirement in 1987, Don set up what was to become a pioneering manufacturer of climbing walls (DR Climbing Walls), designing and building over 400 walls and structures throughout the world.

I was always intrigued by Don's tales of the outdoors, his rescues and future projects. He'd first developed a great love of adventure as a Scout and Army Cadet and it was during this time his fascination for the underground was born — his first forays with a bathing costume and candle!

He left school in 1944 to study at Loughborough College and became a qualified craft teacher aged just nineteen. Called up for national service, he chose to go into the navy to see the world but he proudly claimed the only seagoing vessel he ever saw was the Isle of Wight ferry.

He was incredibly fit. I remember him running Burnsall Fell Race a number of times — the last time when he was 79 — a number of runners behind him half his age. He also had a passion for jazz. Don was an amazing gent, a lateral thinker, lived life to the full and always had the time to talk to everyone. I am very grateful to Mr Eric Daniels a friend of Don, who helped me with the obituary. ☺



MAY: COLLIE TAKES A SWIFT SHORT CUT

It was dog rescue number 57 for the Upper Wharfedale team when North Yorkshire Police asked them to attend Kilnsey Crag to rescue a farm dog that had become cragfast.

A small team went up the crag and a member abseiled down to Swift, who was carefully placed in an animal bag and hauled to the top of the crag to be happily reunited with the farmer's wife. She later posted on the team's website the family gratitude. 'Thank you so much for saving our precious farm dog Swift who had decided to take a short cut home after a busy day's work out on the fells and got stuck on the crag. You are amazing!'

Needless to say, another family now joins the many UWFRA supporters in the Yorkshire Dales.

Photos © Alan Scowcroft UWFRA.



communications and working relationships between the two services. The 2009 constitution regularised this, but this arrangement seems to have atrophied in recent years.

So, many changes along the way but the interests of mountain and cave rescue remain the same and remain intertwined.

The relative emphasis between mountain and cave rescue has fluctuated over the years as a result of changes in work load. Cave teams have not had to deal with the same increase in trade as mountain rescue, for many reasons. The numbers involved in caving have never been large and have declined, and caving has become safer. Single rope techniques replacing ladder and line have led to fewer falls, better clothing has reduced the problems of hypothermia, better lighting means that total light failure is now very rare, and clubs and other organisations provide better training.

That said, cave rescue teams are always there when their skills are required. For example, three teams fielded around a hundred members over the 2012 three-day search for April Jones in mid-Wales.

While the workload of mountain rescue teams has rocketed, cave rescue teams have continued to do what they always have done and about as often as they always have done it. Call-outs may be infrequent but other problems have become more difficult as cavers discover new challenges underground and teams have to be equipped, ready and able to reach and retrieve them from wherever they are and from whatever scrape they've got themselves into.

So, what else?

Another question arises from time to time regarding how much cave rescue costs MREW. I don't fully understand why but the evidence is pretty clear that it costs much less to run a cave rescue team than it does a mountain rescue one and this is perhaps as well because cave rescue teams, being less in the public eye, do not find it easy to raise funds.

Some team costs are met nationally — either from some form of national fundraising — or from sporadic government grants. In the past there's been money from the NHS, the Sports Council and the DfT to

Top right: Upper Wharfedale practice underground © Russ Brooks. Right: CRO working above ground © Bill Batson.

support both mountain and cave rescue with the money administered by mountain rescue. BCRC and MREW have separate access to the UKSAR training fund financed by LIBOR fine money, through the Charity Aid Foundation who administer it.

Cave teams have occasionally benefited from equipment paid for out of MREW general funds (eg. ten red jackets per team and a number of gas monitors) and teams also receive the magazine. Probably the biggest cost is the provision of insurances for both mountain and cave teams.

As has always been the case, BCRC and its teams need MREW more than MREW needs them. However, it's far from a one way street and cave rescuers have always tried to play their part by supporting MREW from the inside, playing an active part on most of the subcommittees. Cavers have also served as regional chairs and national officers. BCRC officers have represented MREW when expedient at UKSAR and other national meetings. So the relationship is a real partnership even though cave rescue is smaller, has fewer resources to contribute and is therefore very much the junior partner.

Final thoughts

When BCRC was seeking a new logo some years ago it was suggested (initially tongue in cheek) that BCRC should use the MREW logo but turn the mountains upside down and call them stalactites. The MREW management at the time thought it an

exist and had to be invented we would not have what we have at the moment. My guess is we would invent a voluntary national 'Inland SAR Organisation' with regions containing relevant mixes of specialist teams (probably mountain, lowland, cave, search dogs, water). The specialists would also need a specialist national body within the overall body to deal with specific issues of their own. The overall body could concentrate on supporting land SAR overall with national fundraising (although most fundraising would probably be at team level as now), lobbying government, negotiating, funding insurance and handling other common issues, with far greater clout than we currently have.

Stripped to essentials, the current message to cave rescuers seems to me to be, 'You've been part of us for over eighty years, helped build MREW into what it is. Yes, you can carry on helping but we no longer believe you deserve a say,' and that



excellent idea so that's what was done. It seemed to reflect that whilst the two services shared so much and worked together in so many ways there were also, for good reason, some differences.

If land search and rescue in the UK did not

hurts. When you consider the history of the two services and the way they have worked together it is unfair, undeserved and in my view bad for both organisations. How have we got to this and is it really what the majority want? ☺



books



CALL OUT: A HISTORY OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE IN IRELAND

BY PAT HOLLAND REVIEWED BY BOB SHARP

A few years ago I was involved in documenting all the rescues undertaken by my own team across its 50-year history. Throughout the two-year study, I contemplated what motivated me, what the end product would mean to readers and how it might impact on current and future practice. Today, I have clear answers to these questions. Documenting the past reveals the hardships and challenges endured (and met) by former members. It celebrates and records for all time the efforts of those who have made a special contribution. Critically, the past provides a road map to the future, a platform from which inefficient methods are uncovered, good practices emerge and the future becomes more predictable. Most important, the documentation of historical evidence is a sign of strong governance — something all teams in the UK are engaged to deliver.

These features are reflected in the latest book by Pat Holland. I know Pat has spent many years researching the history of mountain rescue in Ireland. It has not been an easy task. Filling in missing gaps,

avoiding untruths and distinguishing facts from anecdotal myths are challenges common when writing about the past. This does take a very special kind of person; someone who perseveres and is willing to spend long hours cataloguing, sifting and organising masses of information. All in the knowledge that the fruits of their work may not reap immediate reward! That only comes in later years. Pat has all these qualities and, beyond these, in documenting the complete history of Irish mountain rescue, he has shown initiative few others possess.

His book begins with a brief account of the all-Ireland organisation — the Irish Mountain Rescue Association (IMRA) — which began life in 1965. Now known as Mountain Rescue Ireland (MRI), it supports and represents all eleven teams based in both Northern Ireland (Mourne and the North West MRTs) and the Republic of Ireland (Donegal, Dublin/Wicklow, Glen of Imaal, South Eastern, Kerry, Galway, Mayo and Sligo/Leitrim MRTs). SARDA Ireland is also a member, but whilst the Police Service of

Northern Ireland has a mountain rescue team, it is not a member of the all-Ireland body.

The first chapter describes a number of incidents that took place before the formalisation of mountain rescue. Not unlike elsewhere in the UK, groups of local people and members of climbing clubs dealt with such incidents before the advent of bespoke rescue teams.

The first part of the book is dedicated to an historical account of each team. Whilst coverage for some is greater than others, there are common threads — the impact of particularly tragic incidents, the importance of joint working, the challenges faced when operating with limited resources and equipment, and the influence of particular individuals whose tenacity and vision enabled great progress. I was tickled to read that one team (the Mourne MRT) had access to radios very early on its life, but their loan from the Royal Ulster Constabulary was conditional on their operation by two police officers, one to work at base and on one on the hill! My own team also worked

like this back in the 1960s. How times have changed.

Pat draws attention to the concerns encountered by some teams during the Northern Ireland 'troubles'. For example, he notes that when helicopter support was required, often two aircraft were tasked — one to secure the incident location and the other to assist the actual rescue. The inclusion of detailed accounts of incidents (many often fatal) and the role of individual

'To lead with a sense of history is not to be a slave to the past but, rather, to acknowledge its power...'

'Effective teams don't ignore history until the time comes to plan their next anniversary.'

members is a theme that runs throughout the book. For me, this adds colour and interest value and reveals the depth of research undertaken and Pat's commitment to 'tell the whole story'. It's worth adding that much supplementary information is included through footnotes and appendices — one of which acknowledges the distinguished service of team members and many others from outside mountain rescue. A nice touch.

The book is essentially a tale of two halves. The first, as mentioned, is a detailed account of each team. For readers who have little knowledge of Ireland's landscape, scale and geography, it would have been useful if Pat had included relevant maps (if only schematic) to illustrate the operational areas of each team, but the inclusion of numerous photographs in the book's centre helps and shows how the likes of clothing, vehicles and corporateness have changed so quickly in recent decades. Many readers will remember woolly balaclavas, Javelin jackets and neoprene waterproofs, all of which have been replaced today by much more effective (and more colourful) items.

The second part of the book is an in-depth look at how the all-Ireland body has changed and developed across the years. Pat has clearly managed to access a rich archive of material including reports and minutes from the very early days in the 1960s and '70s. This section shows how the teams came about and joined (and in one case left) the overseeing body as the years progressed. It reveals the gradual transition as walking clubs gave way to formal teams and the often tortuous process where teams were required to justify their operation and locus within the rescue fraternity.

Pat examines the wider picture and the key problem centred on which government

department should take responsibility for mountain rescue, especially in regard to funding. In the early days there were discussions about how the all-Ireland body would be funded and monitored by two different countries — Northern Ireland and the Republic. Funding was the focus of long campaigns by the all-Ireland body, which targeted several government departments. This proved to be less problematic in Northern Ireland where the Northern Ireland Office established the Northern Ireland Mountain and Cave Rescue Coordinating Committee. It was some years later that a similar coordination committee was established in the Republic under the Department of Environment. Notably, both these initiatives led to enhanced accountability and governance of all teams as well as some guarantee of funding, albeit limited.

The second section continues with a look into the issue of attempted 'takeover' by other organisations, notably the Civil Defence and the Fire Service. Pat underlines the vulnerability of non-statutory organisations like mountain rescue that have no formal identity within government, but still make a valuable contribution to society. He also reveals a wide number of challenges that faced the all-Ireland body during the 1970s and '80s — communication with teams, constitutional dilemmas, technical standards, funding, membership, insurance for team members and the juxtaposition of IMRA as a coordinating body which still has to recognise team independence. But despite many challenges and difficulties, Pat shows how the all-Ireland body entered a very positive phase with the new millennium. Amongst many developments, it established

mountain rescue in Ireland that mirrors developments elsewhere in Wales, England and Scotland. This just shows the commonality of purpose across the UK and the natural development of organisations with similar goals. But underlying this, Pat's book reveals in remarkable detail, the step by step changes, the unique challenges faced by individual teams and especially the role and impact of very many individuals who have given a large part of their lives to promoting, delivering and shaping mountain rescue at individual and/or all-Ireland level. The level of detail in some parts is quite extraordinary.

Pat is to be congratulated for producing such an enjoyable and informative read that should find a home in every team's library and certainly on the bookshelf of every member of Irish mountain rescue.

It's worth finishing with a quote from an American source that captures the importance of history and books such as this.

'To lead with a sense of history is not to be a slave to the past but, rather, to acknowledge its power. A team's store of experience — its evolving culture and capabilities, its development within the broader contexts in which it has operated, and its interactions with government and other organisations — shapes the choices teams have to make and influences how people think about the future.'

'Effective teams don't ignore history until the time comes to plan their next anniversary. And though they may not view themselves as historians, teams find it useful to think and talk about the past — in the present and in living colour. They make their collective experience an explicit part of their thinking in order to better discern what form



Opposite page: Mourne Mountain Rescue Team. Above left: South Eastern Mountain Rescue Team. Photos courtesy of Pat Holland.



Above right: Dublin Wicklow team leaders, 30th anniversary.

Call out: A History of Mountain Rescue in Ireland by Patrick Holland is published by Thalassa Press, Co Tipperary, Ireland. Price: £20. Available from lettertec.com

charitable status, became affiliated to MREW and the MRCofS, established a nationwide training programme, secured financial backing and, most important, secured funding to employ a part time development officer.

There is much about the history of

change can and should take. They find in it a rich source of experiences that can motivate people to embrace change even in difficult times. In doing so, they don't simply manage their organisation more effectively; they find their own place in history.' 📖

CARTOON CROW HELPS DALES TEAM PROMOTE SAFETY IN THE OUTDOORS



CRO has long supported 'safety procedures in associated activities' including, decades ago, an involvement in producing the first Caving Safety Code, since adopted and developed by the British Caving Association.

For over 50 years, CRO has published an annual account of incidents attended, partly at least, to help others understand where some of the lost or injured may have gone wrong. This began as a typed list, turned out on a duplicator in the back office at Settle Police Station, but gradually developed into a multi-page, coloured booklet, largely paid for by advertising. Although direct criticism of the team's clients is never published, it has been difficult not to let the word 'avoidable' slip in, from time to time!

One CRO initiative, shared with other teams in the north of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, was the 'Calling for HELP' card, giving bullet-point advice on how to call for a rescue team, precautions to take before going out and where to obtain more detailed safety advice. A single fold takes the card to credit card size, to fit easily into a wallet or first aid kit. This is now on its third printing.

The outside of the CRO exhibition trailer gives a very professional impression, but for several years the display inside looked like what it was: homemade. With the development of Stories in Stone (storiesinstone.org.uk) a scheme of conservation and community projects concentrated on the Ingleborough area, came an opportunity to change all this. The Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership, led by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, provided a grant of £5,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the replacement of the trailer display panels and variant panels for a portable display. Featured are a timeline from the 1930s to the present, how CRO works, some of the specialist equipment needed for above and below ground and, of particular relevance here, a Kids' Zone.



And so to Crow. For a few years now, a cartoon crow — 'Crow' being CRO's radio call-sign — has been used as a branding for the team's biggest annual fundraising event, the Ingleborough Challenge. The original crow was drawn by Mark Nuttall (a professional animator and brother of the challenge's coordinator). From somewhere, came a knitted crow, which all the District's Beavers and Cubs, who visit base, immediately wanted to adopt, so it was inevitable that he should feature in the Kids' Zone where he challenges children to put priority (magnetic) items onto a rucksack outline, then asks them to decide what number to ring for help and who to ask for, when connected.

The idea has developed further and, thanks to a second grant from the Stories in Stone project, the team has been able to produce a large quantity of safety leaflets for children. The cartoon Crow, redrawn by Hunt Emerson, gives advice on the same issues as in the MREW safety leaflet, although the idea actually came from a French multi-agency leaflet entitled 'En Montagne PRUDENCE = BONNES VACANCES'.

One side bears eight cartoons illustrating the key safety messages and urges the child reader to ask an adult about anything she or he doesn't understand. On some of the leaflets, the other side has an outline of Crow, for colouring in, but most are blank, so that safety or rescue-related quizzes, word-searches or crosswords may be photocopied there, depending on the age of the target audience. The leaflets will be distributed this summer, to schools, residential centres and other accommodation, as well as local and visiting families then, in the longer term, to teachers and leaders in advance of group visits. All components will also be available for downloading from cro.org.uk, when the site is updated, later this year. ☺



MARCH: WHERE LAND SEARCH AND RESCUE MEETS THE SEA

The Severn Area Rescue Association operates both Coastguard-declared lifeboats and Land SAR capabilities and sometimes these disciplines need to work together, writes **Richard Newhouse**. Training for this eventuality, in March, the scenario in the Lower Wye Valley was that two girls – roles ably played by two staff members from a local building society – had been missing overnight, having last been seen playing in the steep woods along the river bank.

A land search party and a lifeboat were deployed from SARA Beachley Lifeboat and Rescue Station to search for them. The missing girls were located, one by each team, near the Roman Harbour opposite the Wintours Leap climbing cliffs facing the Wye.

They both had some convincing 'injuries', so the land and boat parties worked together to provide casualty care and evacuate them carefully onto the boat. Due to the low tide this required the smaller of the two inshore lifeboats from Beachley and a good degree of teamwork, with the backrope getting quite muddy! Once on board the casualties were taken downstream to safety and a waiting exercise ambulance.

SARA is a true multi-disciplinary organisation. The team included two qualified and two trainee casualty carers, and two rope rescue supervisors. Almost everyone at the cas site was also SRT qualified. Whilst this was an exercise, the different teams within SARA frequently work together on call-outs. The same combination of lifeboat, land and rope teams had been deployed two days earlier, during a real missing person search slightly further downstream. Sadly on that occasion the lifeboat crew found the body of the person on the bank of the river.

Photos © SARA.



Raising funds for rescue

SINCE OCTOBER 2018: WALKING THE ENTIRE COASTLINE OF BRITAIN FOR MOUNTAIN RESCUE, LOWLAND RESCUE AND THE RNLI

On 3 October 2018, Beth Wickes gave up her home in the West Midlands to walk around the entire coast of Britain, from lifeboat station to lifeboat station, to raise money and awareness for Lowland Rescue, Mountain Rescue England and Wales and the RNLI.

Beth set off from Tower RNLI station in central London in her solo, unsupported, full-time, anticlockwise walk. By June, she had walked over 16,000 miles, raising public awareness and funds for her charities along the way, relying on the kindness of strangers to help ease the huge costs of accommodation and food by offering her spare rooms and meals.

'Walking six days in every eight, up to twelve miles a time, the furthest I'd walked before was seventeen miles in the Malvern Hills as a training exercise,' says Beth, 'although I was a keen walker with the Ramblers before this. Since October I've walked the coast of Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Avon, South Wales and the Pembrokeshire coast. Just another few thousand miles to go before I end where I started, at Victoria Embankment, London!'

Good luck Beth, and safe journey!

YOU CAN SUPPORT BETH ALONG THE WAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA VIA TWITTER @BETHFOOTFORWARD OR INSTAGRAM @CHARITYCOASTALWALK. AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO SUPPORT HER EFFORTS ALONG THE WAY, CHECK OUT BETHFOOTFORWARD.CO.UK

Photo courtesy of Beth Wickes.

TEAM TALK SPRING

JUNE: WELSH TEAM HELPS IN SEARCH FOR MISSING MAN ON ZANTE

John Tossell went missing on 17 June when he set off for a walk to visit the monastery on Mount Skopos. He didn't return to the hotel or his partner Gillian. The family set up a Go Fund Me page to enable members of the Western Beacons team to continue the search for John in Zante.

On Friday 28 June, six team members flew out to Zante, to work with the Greek authorities. A further team of volunteers was on standby to assist, if required.

'It will be a challenging search on unfamiliar terrain but we remain hopeful about finding John,' said Scott Wilson-Evans, Western Beacons team press officer.



ANNUAL REVIEW 2019 (PDF) IS AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD FROM THE MREW WEBSITE. OR BUY THE PRINT VERSION FROM THE ONLINE SHOP, PRICE £3 + P&P.

Getting to grips with the Trustees' Annual Report

HEATHER SIMPSON BCRC Treasurer

All member teams and regions, as charities, need to prepare a Trustees Annual Report (TAR). Although it can include other information, such as team news, some things must be included, such as the statutory 'Public Benefit' statement. All but the smallest unincorporated teams submit their TAR to the Charity Commission (CC) with accounts and independent review/audit report.

Just uploading the AGM reports or copying what the last person did is unlikely to produce a compliant TAR, as accounting and charity law constantly evolves. So if you do not have the benefit of a specialist charity accountant, a good place to start each year, is with the latest CC template: www.gov.uk/topic/running-charity/money-accounts.

Once the legal requirements of the TAR are complete, the prompts, tables and section numbers can be cut away to provide a much nicer looking TAR to hand to donors and interested parties. Or they can be left in place, making it easy for the CC and others to see that you are compliant with the latest legislation.

As an accountant, I find the TAR a great annual exercise, to remind us all what we set out to do and to check that we are doing it. It can raise many issues, such as 'mission creep', outgrown charity 'objects' and which officers are or should be trustees. However, I have yet to convince another living soul of the wonders of this administrative 'navel-gazing' exercise!

The CC has recently stated that it may take regulatory action to improve rather low compliance rates on public benefit reporting. The CIO membership panel will also be reviewing TARs over the next year or so. You can review your and their latest CC uploads here: www.gov.uk/find-charity-information.

Feel free to email me via heather@wildesaccountants.co.uk or treasurer@caverescue.org.uk or call 01789 204966 if, as a fellow member, you would like a bit of free, confidential support. ☺



MARCH: Two North East teams work together in challenging joint training exercise in Northumberland

On a brisk Sunday back in March, North of Tyne Mountain Rescue Team and Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team visited the beautiful hills of Simonside, near Rothbury for a joint training exercise. **Helena Sansum** reports.

Both teams operate within the Northumbria Police area, working closely together. Joint exercises are an essential component of training schedules for both teams so best practice always prevails when it's needed most. Training exercises are often designed to be challenging, where areas for learning and development can be identified.

During the morning, various workshops took place covering different aspects of team operations with team members rotating around each station in small groups. Sessions included the set-up of North of Tyne's control vehicle, use of drones in search and rescue, updates to rope rescue techniques, radio relay stations, dealing with major trauma injuries and the standard operating procedure for loading stretchers into vehicles. The afternoon is when training really heated up — time to put into practice the skills and knowledge that were refreshed during the morning. Team members new and old, along with trainee team members, gathered around for a brief. Those who would be controlling the training exercise were called into the control vehicle to set the wheels in motion, metaphorically.

The training exercise involved a mock call-out for a fallen rock climber sustaining multiple traumatic injuries and for their cragfast climbing partner. The exact location of the incident was unknown, so a small hasty party went up to the crags of Simonside to see if they could get a visual. The mobile phone number of the cragfast climber was known, as the person who would have called mountain rescue, so a text message was sent to their mobile from control using PhoneFind. This provided control with a grid reference of their location. Time to get going.

Team members were organised into groups and mobilised towards the incident site in team vehicles to carry vital equipment to the exercise casualties. The fallen rock climber in the scenario had sustained traumatic injuries to their pelvis and leg and the cragfast climber would need to be safely lowered to the ground, so various medical and technical rope rescue equipment was needed. Back in the control vehicle, radio communications were coming and going at quite a pace to keep abreast of the developing situation. Due to the serious nature of the fallen climber's injuries, in this training exercise an exercise air ambulance was requested.

Team members looking after the fallen climber, treated and packaged them onto a stretcher, ready for carry-out to the 'waiting helicopter'. Far from the exercise being over however, the exercise casualty then went into cardiac arrest during the carry-out. Always prepared for such eventualities, team members deployed a defibrillator, delivered shocks, monitored their exercise casualty and continued onwards towards the helicopter. Meanwhile, the team members responding to the cragfast climber had also managed to safely lower their exercise casualty to the ground using up-to-date rope rescue techniques.

Although a certain amount of imagination is required during training exercises, as a helicopter didn't really turn up and, thankfully, the exercise casualty didn't really go into cardiac arrest, such training exercises are invaluable as they are still realistic. Those team members at the forefront of the exercise would have certainly felt the pressure. For trainee team members, such training offers a fantastic overview of how the teams respond to incidents and present opportunities to get stuck in and learn on the job.

All in all, a long day out but one with several opportunities to fine tune the already superb work team members demonstrate. There were great efforts all round and moving forwards, there's time to reflect on how the day progressed, opportunities to discuss events with colleagues and implement any improvements identified.

Last but not least, we were also joined by Gavin Forster from Media Borne who captured some striking images throughout the day. We wish to say a huge thank you to Gavin for being there and supporting the teams. 🙌

All images © Gavin Forster of Media Borne.

APRIL: THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALLENDALE CHALLENGE

HELENA SANSUM

The Allendale Challenge is considered by many to be one of the toughest challenge walks around, covering 26 miles of some of the finest peat bogs in the North Pennines. Over the years, the event has gained a reputation for being something you develop a bit of a love-hate relationship with! And rightly so.

Launched in 1987, when the newly-formed North of Tyne team was financially destitute, the challenge was conceived as a way to raise vital funds for the team — and it's only now celebrating its 30th year, because the Foot and Mouth outbreak caused the event to be cancelled on two occasions.

Taking an anti-clockwise loop from Allendale town, the route includes 1017 metres of total ascent and descent across moorland, bogs, peat hags and rocky trails and the weather can be as challenging as the terrain. We've seen it all, from sunburnt participants struggling with the heat, to participants battling through snowdrifts waist deep!

This year was a sell-out, with 850 of our fantastic supporters taking part. Most walk, but a few hardy souls don their running shoes and compete in a fell race. On the way round, we provide calories mostly in the form of Jelly Babies and Jaffa Cakes, hot drinks and plenty of good hearted banter.

It's a huge team effort involving almost year round organisation, from securing sponsors for a raffle, drumming up interest on social media, scoring freebies from supermarkets and planning the deployment of personnel. And the pie, peas and pint at the end are as famous as the event itself.

Every year, a group of 'originals' (as they're affectionately known), come out of mountain rescue retirement to support the event. One such original and event founder, Ian 'Dutchy' Holland, decided to take part in this year's event to mark the occasion. He entered the running category and finished in a respectable six hours fifteen minutes. On arrival back at Allendale Village Hall, team leader Mark Silmon presented Ian with a framed copy of the very first Allendale Challenge certificate and badge.

'The 30th Allendale has been particularly poignant for me,' says Ian. 'After instigating it and being involved for so long, I decided to retire. In a foolish moment I also decided to participate this year. It was a memorable day and I was pleased to complete the course and received a great welcome at the finish. I hope the event



The 'Originals' © Martin Ellis.

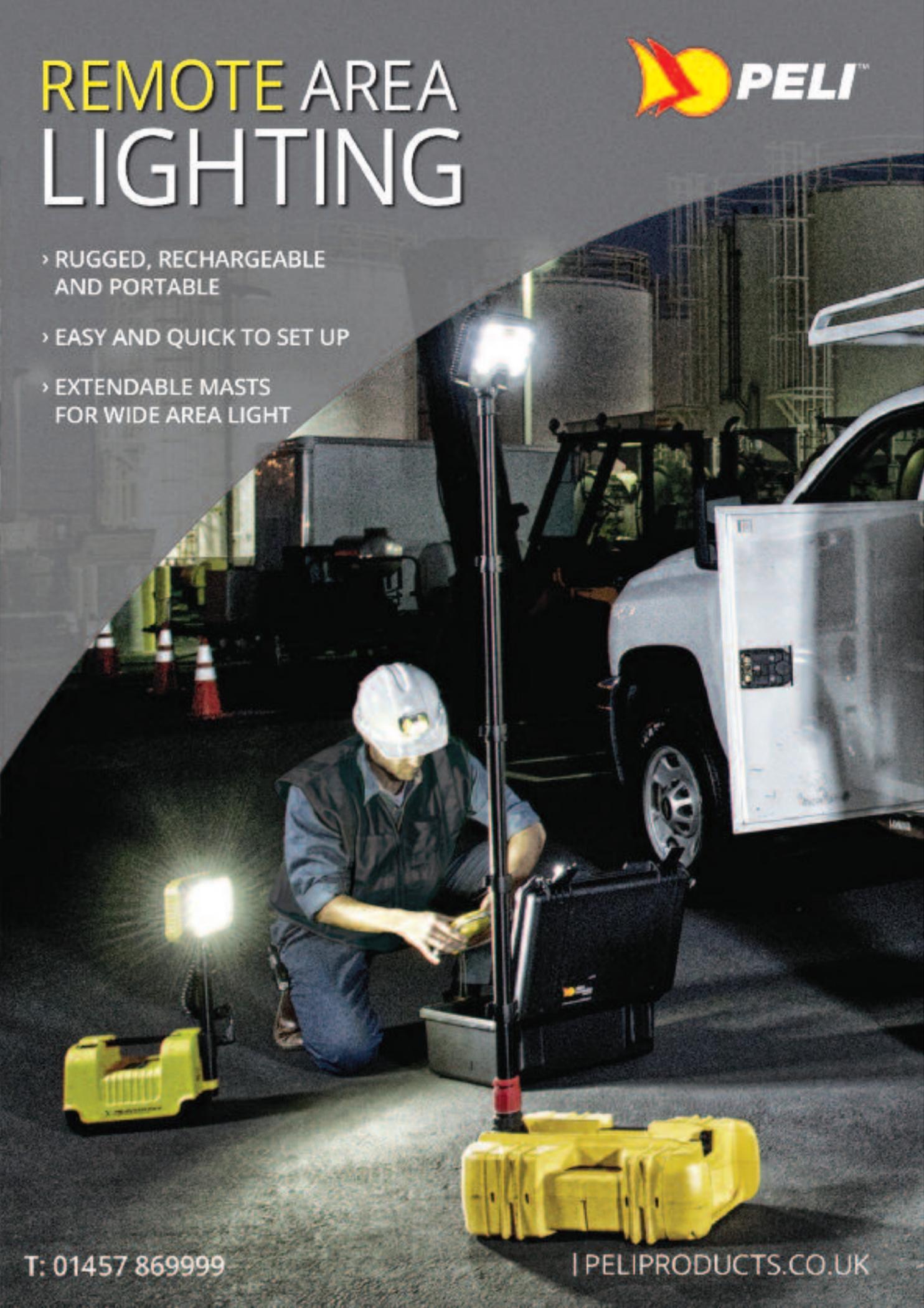
continues to grow in popularity and to generate funds for the team. It has been a privilege to have been associated with the challenge and to have made so many friends through the team.'

The participants show so much grit, determination and humour along the way. We couldn't run the event without them and the amazing support of our team members who take on extra duties to make it the success that it is — thank you to each and every one of you. A big effort but one that provides the biggest annual fundraising result for our team. We can't wait for next year! 🙌

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TEAM TALK SPRING



JUNE: CALDER TEAM SAYS FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO ELLIE SHERWIN

Long-standing Calder Valley team member Ellie Sherwin is stepping down from active duty and moving away from the Calder Valley to Pembrokeshire after over thirty years in mountain rescue as a team member and search dog handler. She was presented with a Life Membership Award in recognition of her service to the team.

During her time with the team, she has taken on a variety of roles, including team secretary and even met her husband, Chris, in the team. 'Ellie is consistently pleasant, uncomplaining and blessed with a common sense approach to problem solving, making you wonder 'Why didn't I think of that?' says team chairman, David Warden. 'She will be sorely missed by the team.'

Through her involvement in Mountain Rescue Search Dogs England (MRSDE) Ellie has provided an invaluable service, both within the team's operational area and further afield. Starting off volunteering as a 'dogs body', Ellie joined CVSRT and took on the huge commitment required to train 'Bonnie', a Border collie pup, to become an air scenting search dog. The hard work paid off with Ellie and Bonnie awarded the shield for the 'best performance by a novice dog and handler' at their final assessment. Bonnie and Ellie made a successful find within weeks of grading and went on to have many more, saving several lives in the process. Following the passing of Bonnie, Ellie successfully trained another Border collie, Pepper, who on her thirteenth birthday, started a well-earned retirement following more than eleven years of dedicated service.

Ellie has been an excellent ambassador for both the team and MRSDE. Her commitment to both organisations has been instrumental in their development over the years. In January this year, she was also made a life member of MRSDE. CVSRT would like to thank Ellie for her many years of dedication to the team and the community it serves, and wish her all the best for the next chapter of her life.

Photo: Ellie with her Life Membership certificate © CVSRT.

MAY: SKYE TEAM ANNOUNCES SAD DEATH OF FORMER MEMBER

Their friend and former mountain rescue colleague Eoghain MacKinnon had been suffering from leukaemia for the last year or so and, unfortunately, the treatment he had been receiving failed to improve his condition.

'Eoghain was an inspiration to everyone who served with the team from the early 1970s until this time last year when he finally retired. His knowledge of the Cuillin, his patience and understanding, his gentle humour and his special storytelling will never be forgotten. And of course his legendary piece box, lovingly prepared by his partner Frances, who is in our thoughts at this sad time.

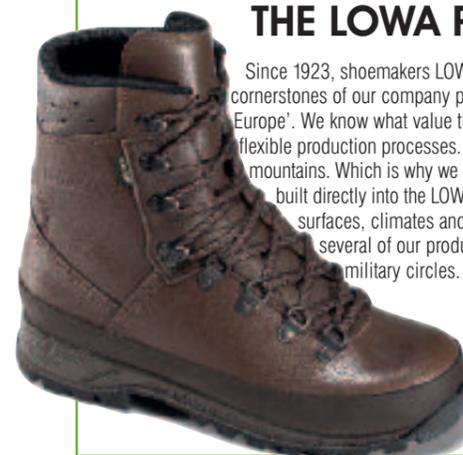
'As John Muir once said, in every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks. So it was in every walk with Eoghain. A mountaineer, a gentleman, a legend.

'Bidh sinn gad ionndrainn, a charaid'.



Photo courtesy of Skye MRT.

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TEAM TALK SPRING



JUNE: YORKSHIRE DALES CAVER DIES AFTER FALL DESPITE MULTI-TEAM RESCUE EFFORT DURING A BUSY DAY FOR CRO

Almost a hundred rescuers battled to save the man's life but he died in the cave as rescuers were preparing to extricate him. The Cave Rescue Organisation was alerted to the incident shortly before 1.00pm on the Saturday afternoon. One of three cavers excavating a new route in Curtain Pot on Fountains Fell, between Malham Tarn and Horton in Ribblesdale, Harry 'Eski' Hesketh had fallen six metres down a pitch deep within the cave, suffering a suspected broken femur. His two companions exited the cave to summon assistance before one returned to him, whilst one awaited the team's arrival.

As an exploration site, the cave was unmapped, nor were the passages of sufficient width to allow extrication of an immobile casualty. Realising this would require major engineering work simultaneously at many places along the length of the cave, as well as fully rigging for rescue, the team called on neighbouring teams and their own reserve cavers list to assist with making access and egress suitable, and with rigging the cave so the casualty could be extricated smoothly once access was secured.

Meanwhile, the team doctor attended the casualty assisted by trained cas carers, who monitored his condition, as well as packaging him for the eventual extrication. Unfortunately, due to the nature of his injuries, and the extended time needed to create a navigable way out, he succumbed to his injuries and died just prior to the extrication beginning.

The other teams involved included Upper Wharfedale, Swaledale, Calder Valley and COMRU, as well as members of Bradford Pothole Club and the Yorkshire Spelio Society, and personnel from North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue. In total, the incident actively involved 94 volunteers for over seventeen and a half hours — including nearly 70 on site below and above ground and others involved in providing food and drink, coordinating resources, both human and equipment, and comms — over 1,626 volunteer hours.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service and YAS HART team and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency were also ready to provide immediate air evacuation in the event of a successful extrication.

All in all, it was a busy day for CRO, with two other incidents occurring at the same time. While the Fountains Fell rescue was underway, the team received another call for help for an injured caver in the western

Dales who had fallen six metres while dismantling a rig in County Pot in Ease Gill, north-east of the village of Leck, injuring her leg. Again, with help from other teams and pothole club members, team members were able to respond rapidly to assist. The casualty was treated and her injury splinted before she was assisted to the surface by cavers from multiple teams. Once the woman was airlifted, many of the rescuers returned to Fountains Fell to the original incident.

At about 6.10pm, another call came in to assist a walker suffering a possible cardiac problem at the top of Malham Cove. The ambulance service was asked to task Upper Wharfedale with the incident, whilst

that due to the severity and urgency of the situation, a lot of equipment had been sacrificed to expedite the potential extraction of the casualty. 'If you feel you could assist the team in helping to replenish our stocks and equipment supplies,' they asked, 'we would be deeply grateful for any donations to help us out.'

They were overwhelmed by the response. 'Folks, your generosity has been overwhelming. When we decided to ask for donations, we hoped that maybe we could raise £100-200 towards the costs of damaged kit and replenishing our supplies ready for the next big incident. Instead you have given us so much more, and left us feeling humbled and grateful. We passed



Top: The scene on the surface at the rescue site on Fountains Fell. Above: Underground. Photos © Swaledale MRT.

Above: Just some of the kit used in the rescue © CRO.

CRO released two surface team members from the Curtain Pot incident, three miles away, to assist. Fortunately, the Yorkshire Air Ambulance was able to make it to the casualty just before team members arrived and the casualty was flown down to Malham village for transfer to ambulance. Once again, rescuers returned to their vehicles to help at the two caving incidents.

It was with great sadness the team later reported the death of a fellow caver, noting

£10,000 this evening [not two days later]. 'The support given by our followers and friends really does buoy the spirit of our members, and we are deeply touched that our efforts are appreciated. In turn we thank you, without whose generous support we simply wouldn't be able to help those in need below and above ground in our area. Your donations will go a long way to support us in our work'. 🙏



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EDELRID HMS BULLETPROOF SCREW FG

The Edelrid Bulletproof range of carabiners aims to extend the life of carabiners that would otherwise be discarded (withdrawn from use) due to wear at the apex – between the nose and spine of the carabiner where the rope runs – and, in so doing, reduce waste.

This is achieved by placing a steel insert at the apex of the carabiner where most wear occurs due to the friction/abrasion of ropes running through the carabiner. Edelrid's strategy of addressing the reduce side of the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' spectrum is aimed at being environmentally friendly, as recycling metal climbing hardware isn't easy. In the long run it could also be cheaper for us, if the kit lasts longer!

There are a number of carabiners in the Bulletproof range and the one I had to look at was the HMS Bulletproof Screw FG. This particular model is really aimed at belaying with the steel insert reducing wear as the rope runs around the bar of the carabiner during belaying. With this being the FG version, there is also an internally-sprung bar at the bottom end of the carabiner where the belay loop from your harness sits during belaying. The purpose of this sprung bar, or belay loop keeper, is to prevent cross loading. Nothing particularly new there, as other makes of carabiners have similar features to achieve this too, but Edelrid's FG version works particularly well. It weighs 84g with a major axis strength of 25kN, whilst its minor axis strength and open gate strength are both 9kN.

So not the lightest HMS screw gate on the market, but if you're only carrying one for belaying/abseiling, is that an issue? For comparison, the Petzl Attache weighs only 54g, but doesn't have the belay loop keeper or the steel insert at the apex.

There is a triple lock version, the HMS Bulletproof Triple FG, for added security (and price) that weighs in at 91g. Other carabiners in the Bulletproof range include HMS screwgate and triple lock biners without the belay loop keeper, a non-HMS screwgate as well as a straight and bent gate version of a standard carabiner for use in quick draws, amongst other uses.

The one I've been using a couple of times a week for the last six months, at the climbing wall and at crag, is showing very little sign of wear. The screwgate is slick and smooth to operate, yet feels secure when done up. It works well too whilst abseiling, helping to achieve a smooth descent. There's not a lot to dislike about this carabiner, except for perhaps the weight and price and given the projected extended life, both could be seen as acceptable trade-offs. ☺

REVIEWED BY **CHRIS COOKSON**



kitcrit



The new Vacuum Mattress

PAUL SMITH MREW EQUIPMENT OFFICER

The Snowsled Vacuum Mattress is an essential piece of rescue equipment we can potentially use on every rescue. It was first introduced in 1994 and designed for the specific requirements of mountain rescue, to be very robust and easy to use. As of 1 June 2017 Aiguille Alpine Equipment, based in Staveley, Cumbria have not only taken over the production of the Vacuum Mattress but also improved the original design.

One of the main changes Aiguille have made is to divide the inner bead compartments into three down the length to help prevent bead migration. This gives a total of fifteen compartments in the new mat as opposed to five in the old style.

On the outer bag, they have changed the lifting handles to bring them into line with the casualty bags, both in style, colour and quantity. They've also changed the fabric from a polyester fabric to nylon which will be more hardwearing.

Following trials by the Medical Subgroup and Equipment Subgroup the changes have been found to make the setting up of the vacmat easier and quicker. Plus, having the beads now separated into fifteen compartments improves the immobilisation of the casualty.

Instructions for use

1. Unroll mattress on a flat surface, black side up, checking that the attached white exhaust nozzle (in the foot area on the red side), is connected.
2. Ensure the beads are properly distributed along the mattress. This can be done by smoothing with a hand backwards and forwards along the black side of the mattress. Sometimes, a greater concentration of beads in different areas may be an advantage.
3. Prepare the casualty and, using the most appropriate method for lifting, gently lay them on the mattress. Ensure that there is no accumulation of beads above the top of the head (where the corners are angled).

4. Gently wrap the mattress sides around the casualty, encouraging the beads to fill gaps beneath the neck, spine and knees. Particularly ensure that the sides of the head are well supported by the mattress. It may be appropriate to use head support cushions as well. Do up the restraining straps.

5. Release the white exhaust nozzle on the mattress and connect the suction pump. On the pump, lower tube is suction.

6. Eight to ten pumps will generally evacuate the mattress to achieve the vacuum required.

7. When the appropriate vacuum is reached, immediately release the connection at the mattress. **DO NOT** reconnect the white exhaust nozzle during use. The straps may need retightening. The vacmat is now ready to be lifted – but see note 1 below.

Additional notes

1. ALWAYS use the lifting handles but never use the end handles on their own.
2. The vacmat is not intended to be used as a stretcher. For transporting a casualty any distance, it must always be used on a board, trolley, stretcher or other flat, rigid surface.
3. After use, it is essential to let air into the mattress before rolling up. Reconnect the white exhaust nozzle and allow up to a minute for air to enter.

Roll up in such a way that the beads are 'rolled in' evenly. This will help to ensure that they will need less spreading out when the mattress is used again. **NEVER** attempt to fold or roll up the mattress in its evacuated state. **ALWAYS** ensure that the white exhaust nozzle is connected and the mattress is floppy before rolling and storing. The mat should be **ROLLED** up before placing in sac, not folded.

4. The vacmat is very robust, however, in the very unlikely event of a leakage, please return to the manufacturer for assessment and repair.

5. **CLEANING.** For light dirt, use only warm water with a non-biological soap. **NEVER** use solvent. High temperature washing is detrimental to the fabric materials and proofings.

For effective decontamination and infection control we advise using the Otex ozone system, using a non-biological wash. This has the additional benefit of being more effective at low (ambient) temperatures (30°C and below). See www.jla.com/laundry-equipment/otex. If this is not available, a local hospital or other facility may be able to help and, for small areas, the use of hospital anti-bacterial surface wipes and sprays may be considered.

6. Remove the tube from the pump prior to packing everything away in the rucksack.





The Novel Mind

An interview with
Hamish MacInnes

How fragile is the human mind? Whilst not as enduring as mountain rock, perhaps they are more resilient than we think. Hamish MacInnes lost the ability to remember his life's adventures, but returning to the mountains and sifting his way through the stories of his life helped rebuild his memories and his mind. **Jonny Dry** from the Mountain Heritage Trust headed north to Glencoe to find out more.

There's a gentleman I recently read about, Sion Jair, who at the age of 68 climbs the Old Man of Coniston every day. Indeed he's been doing this for years, twice a day up and back. After being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, the visceral pull of the Coniston fells is clearly strong enough to ground his ailing memory. Mountains provide a welcome familiarity.

Such was the experience for Hamish MacInnes. After being admitted to hospital in Glasgow there was a general consensus that Hamish had little conscious memory left. Diagnosed with delirium and subjected to scans, internal examinations and endless bureaucracy, he admits himself that he was, at that stage, dying. Down to eight-and-a-half stone, the life and climbs that he had undertaken had been entirely forgotten and it looked unlikely he would ever improve.

Certainly many in the mountaineering community had low expectations of a recovery.

Under the direction of his consultant, Hamish was transferred back home to Glencoe, requiring regular nursing support to undertake the most basic of tasks and still unable to recall much of his life's achievements. Caught in a white clinical setting, Hamish had received little stimulation. Yet once back amidst Glencoe's mountains that framed much of his life, Hamish began to piece things together. Although the physical feats and achievements of his life had been forgotten, he was still all too aware that he was inherently a climber. 'You don't lose that. When you're cooped up in a hospital for years you're certainly very conscious of it.' Perhaps climbers have an underlying essence; no matter what they are subjected to, that identity is innate.

Speaking to him now in January 2019, with the promise of winter snow dusting the mountain tops, the sharpness and clarity of his mind is all

too apparent and he states proudly that he's back to almost 100% capacity. It has not been easy. The process of rediscovery has been long and at times painful and Hamish's dogged determination is clearly what has got him through. There's little reason it shouldn't have worked with recalling his memory, it's worked on hard climbs across the world.

Making the first British ascent of the Dru's Bonatti Pillar in 1958 with Don Whillans, Paul Ross and Chris Bonington, Hamish suffered a serious skull fracture following rock fall at the end of their first day. Bandaged and

Diagnosed with delirium and subjected to scans, internal examinations and endless bureaucracy, he admits himself that he was, at that stage, dying.

stuffed in one corner of their bivouac ledge, Hamish was determined to continue. Aided by Don, Chris and Paul, Hamish doggedly persisted. With Don continually growling that they were almost there, cloud began expectantly gathering over the surrounding aiguilles. Day three, summit day, saw the weather deteriorate and by day four all four climbers were on their knees. Hamish's hands were dangerously cold, his gloves mislaid somewhere behind them. An Austrian party ahead of them was also tiring and a wrong turn during the descent had put them on the wrong side of the Flamme des Pierres. The group returned to the Charpoua hut, battered, cold but happy, Hamish clearly requiring treatment.

Hamish is visibly proud of such ascents, and I'm struck by how that perseverance is most definitely still there. Curiosity and tenacity has been a potent mix upon returning from Glasgow, and it's not been enough for Hamish to simply to drag his mind back from the brink. He's done it in a

way that maintains the utmost accuracy of his memories. He cracks and laughs at the detail he can still recall. 'It's very embarrassing, I can remember back away to 1946. I remember this chap and think, he's dead now, but I can remember how many sugars he had in his tea.'

Writing in Call-Out, Hamish has said himself how some of his 'most memorable recollections have been of rescues'. Mountains and disaster are clearly vivid in his mind and it's imperative as we talk that the facts are adhered to. I wondered, though, whether his relationship with danger and rescue had changed after piecing his memory back together. 'That's an interesting point,' he muses before falling silent. I'm aware suddenly of the clock ticking over the mantelpiece. He thinks hard before answering. 'See, I started reading my books again, and a lot of these are about rescue. I had a fantastic library.'

Hamish has been a prolific writer in his time, often publishing books that have set a benchmark in the mountaineering community. His International Mountain Rescue Handbook — distilling expertise from around global and published in 1971 — has never been out of print and is now in its fourth edition. His guidebooks date back to 1969, covering rock and winter climbing as well as a guide to West Highland walks which extends to four volumes. His writing in the Alpine Journal on climbs with John Cunningham, Yeti hunting in the Kulu, and hard ascents in the Caucasus on Pic Shchurovsky's North Face and the Shkhelda traverse is vividly candid, and captures his often intentional approach to climbing.

These are the threads that Hamish used to stitch himself back together. Meticulously re-reading and re-reading his personal archive to make sense of it all. 'I was curious,' he says, 'I wanted to find out'. No-one told him to undertake such an exercise, it was merely something of the drive within him to never settle and to constantly want to know more. Yet how strange must that have been? Seeing yourself



Opposite: Hamish underneath the Eiger North Face in 1957 © Chris Bonington Picture Library.

Article first published in Summit #93, Spring 2019. Words and images reproduced here with kind permission of the BMC, Jonny and the Chris Bonington Picture Library.



Right: Hamish making kit adjustments on the 1975 British Everest Expedition © Chris Bonington Picture Library.



on the wildest of faces yet not remembering being there. Watching Hamish now re-call the books he read to return his mind to where it is today, it is clear that his relationship with danger and rescue is still as pragmatic as ever.

I ask whether rescues were some of the first and most arresting memories to come back. Here Hamish paused again. 'There's one on the Buachaille,' he said before pausing to reflect. 'I'm trying to sort this in my mind.' He went to answer suddenly, but caught himself. It was clear the memory wasn't fully formed in his mind and he had little interest in recounting false information to me. The room fell silent. Hamish's eyes were fixed on Meall Mòr framed outside his window. He was thinking hard.

Maintaining such ordered thinking is

He went to answer suddenly, but caught himself. It was clear that the memory wasn't fully formed in his mind.

well documented in Hamish. His engineering background has pushed many innovations that revolutionised safety. The Terror — the first all metal ice axe designed in 1970 — was founded on the principle of precisely

chosen angles and materials. At every turn was the possibility of reinventing what an ice axe could be and the detail with which Hamish produced and refined his designs drove '70s winter climbing standards higher. Even now, at the age of 88, his Mk8 MacInnes stretcher — first designed in the early 1960s — is due to be delivered directly to his house for him to review and approve the final model ahead of field testing.

Hamish took a step away from the direct design years ago, but the Mk8 is exemplary of modern day innovation, utilising the high grade composites found in the aeronautical sector. Hamish is clearly proud. The fact his original designs still hold up to modern day standards, even as materials have become positively space-age, is a marker of how his meticulous mind has produced lasting designs.

Sat across from him now I could see that mind at work. Older, worn and worse for wear, but still unwilling to compromise. It was clear he would not be rushed. I thought at first I might have found a gap in his memory, and I began to wonder how far might I let this silence extend out before I changed the subject. Hamish needed nothing of the sort though. His mind began to fire as he isolated the memory he was after, 'ah yes, I've got it now'. True to form, perhaps from

sheer force of will, he dragged the memories to the surface and forced them to form a coherent memory. It was certainly impressive.

It was January 1961, Buchaille Etive Mor and three climbers had fallen from Crowberry Gully. Conditions at the time were less than ideal, a previous frost left a hard under-layer that the subsequent snow fall had failed to properly bond to. The lead climber, Robert Gow, was avalanched and swept off route, pulling his partners David Tod and Neil Keith from their stance. The three climbers fell more than 1,000 feet, Robert Gow was dead. Neil and David managed to self-evacuate and raise the alarm. Hamish recounts such events with a quiet assurance, even dark humour. Death is something that is all too familiar and he had a fair share of his own close encounters.

In 1951, just 21 at the time, Hamish decided to solo the Charmoz-Grépon Traverse. Whilst all too aware he was pushing the envelope, the exuberance of youth could not be held back. He'd already soloed the Matterhorn's Hornli Ridge at 18, and made a repeat ascent of Herman Buhl's winter route on the Predigstuhli in the Kaiser mountains. And a chance meeting with French guide Lionel Terray in Snell's Field gave Hamish the opportunity to follow Terray and his client up the route. It was clearly too good an opportunity to miss. Hamish remembers well the 'sheer magic of the great face, walls and towers'. Even 68 years later the experience is as vividly recalled as ever.

The climb progressed without fault, on the Mummery Crack Terray watched with interest as the exuberant youth tackled the bold moves. Fear and self-doubt figures little in his recollections, yet looking back to the day Hamish is all too aware of the real reason Terray perhaps wanted him close at hand. Maybe it is 'preferable to be able to keep an eye on someone, who you know is determined on a course of rash action than to pick up the bits'.

Hamish was lucky. Content with the day he began the abseil behind Terray. Yet suddenly Hamish found himself falling through space, out and away from the slung rock bollard. He hit the ledge 40 feet below; the sling had failed, corroded by UV light. His legs had doubled up beneath him, crumpling upon impact. His head was bleeding and he could barely see from the pain. The 600 feet down to the glacier lay to one side. Terray was indeed there to pick up the bits, along with aspirant Raymond Lambert who was climbing nearby on the Grepon.

Hamish walked away with, in his words, 'the gait on an ungainly ballet dancer'.

Hamish shrugs at such events. What more is there to say? One makes their decision and lives with the consequences. He's used to identifying and fixing problems and used to having agency. Or at the very least living with the consequences of that agency. 'Accidents occur in the mountains just as they do anywhere else', he suggests in his 1973 publication Call-Out. 'Even if the casualty is guilty of negligence, the experience of an accident is generally chastisement enough.' Things balance out in the mountains and Hamish has been around long enough to be comfortable with taking the rough with the smooth.

For a man used to this darker side of mountain rescue, it was affecting to see the change in him as our talk turns to his time in hospital in Glasgow. The memories are still fresh, arguably fresher than the lifetime's worth of mountaineering that has recently come back to him. He's guarded as he talks of life in hospital, his experiences were clearly harrowing. Screaming patients, confusion, and imposed routine that was not his. Now he's back to the familiarity of operating on just a few hours' sleep a day; he runs, walks, lifts weights and this return to his natural rhythm has seen him not only increase his physical strength but mental fortitude as well.

He talks briefly about his future plans. [As we speak] Final Ascent, the film about his experience, is on the horizon. An even deeper exploration of his recent journey and a delve in to his own mountain history. It was well received at screenings in NZ, Kathmandu, and previewed at Kendal in 2018. The UK premiere was at Glasgow Film Festival. Hamish though, wasn't there. 'I don't want to go back there,' he says. Dragging up his memories of hospital has been difficult and feels out of place where we are now. It's obvious the film hit very close to home.

He's back to living independently and relishes being amongst Glencoe's current cutting-edge developments again. He needs that stimulation. The likes of Dave MacLeod and Glencoe Mountain Rescue Leader Andy Nelson are still regular visitors. With the former, Hamish is consulting on a comparison climb of Raven's Gully in which Dave reclaims the route using the gear that Hamish and Chris Bonington would have had to hand back in 1953. He



Death is something that is all too familiar and he had a fair share of his own close encounters.

smiles at this. 'These modern climbers are so strong, I'm sure he'll be fine.'

There's an interest as well in revisiting many of his life's accomplishments. Unpublished memoirs are being written which often take him back to the late 1940s to revisit his early climbs in Austria and Italy as an 18-year-old. Forgotten memories have also been unearthed again and he talks of remembering a self-rescue off Waterpipe Gully on Sgùrr an Fheadain in the late 1950s. The trigger was a painting of the gully shown to him by Graham Hunter.

Memory is incredibly fragile, certainly more fragile than the mountains with which he is so familiar. Walking away down the garden path however, I can't help but think there's something else that is just as immovable as the mountains. Looking back over his films and photography it's apparent Hamish was never surprised at seeing himself on these huge faces, even if he couldn't initially remember it. Memory it seems is fallible, yet Hamish's character has remained as fundamental as ever. ☺

Top: Hamish on bivouac below difficult crack in 1957 on the Eiger North Wall © Chris Bonington Picture Library.

Above: Hamish's old home in Glen Coe © Bob Sharp.

JONNY DRY IS A WRITER AND FILM DIRECTOR WHO ALSO WORKS FOR THE MOUNTAIN HERITAGE TRUST, ALPINE CLUB AND MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION. FIND HIM ON TWITTER @JONNY_DRY.

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A day in the life of a mountain heritage archivist

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Photos courtesy of Ulverston Inshore Rescue

Work continues in our collaboration with Mountain Heritage Trust, and we will continue to celebrate our mountain rescue history through the pages of this magazine. Meanwhile, if you've ever wondered what exactly is involved in the collection, preservation and archiving of material, here's MHT's Charlotte McCarthy with an explanation.

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A qualified archivist and museum professional, I have worked in heritage for over twenty years (very scary how quickly that time has gone). Over my career I've been lucky enough to work for some amazing businesses and charities — British Railways, Trinity Laban, Diageo, Boots and now Mountain Heritage Trust (MHT) — exploring their heritage through the archives and objects I've helped to appraise, repackage and catalogue, and through the oral history interviews I've recorded with passionate retired employees, current staff and volunteers.

Once mistaken for an archaeologist (someone once said it must be interesting to dig up bodies all the time!!) my role as the Collections Manager (Archivist) at MHT is a varied one. Every day is different. As the only full time member of staff, a typical day starts with me opening up the office and checking to see if we've received any enquiries from members of the public, researchers, students and climbers, which relate to the collections we hold here at MHT.

The archive collection consists of a variety of documents including photographs and slides, letters, expedition reports, posters and adverts, climbing magazines, maps, digital files and oral history recordings.

We're also extremely fortunate to hold a large number of museum objects relating to climbing and mountaineering, some of which form part of our handling collection, which are used to engage and inspire communities. Objects range from a small hex or ice screw to a large stretcher. Or even a pair of skis. My favourite item in the collection though is the fruit cake in a tin, which went up Kangchenjunga and came down again — uneaten!!

Most enquiries are extremely straightforward, such as someone wanting to use an image in a magazine article or more complex such as an international researcher asking me to research a particular topic ie. expeditionary medicine or a museum wanting to loan items for an exhibition. When not dealing with enquiries, I'm also responsible for responding to any offers of donations to the collection. This is where the archives' collecting policy comes into being as it states what we will and won't collect and it also ensures we don't accept material we already hold in the collection.

I spend a large portion of my time appraising, repackaging and cataloguing our collections to make them accessible. I also supervise three amazing volunteers who give up their time one day a week to help me achieve our cataloguing goals. In fact, two of my volunteers just recently completed a significant milestone — numbering (by hand) 10,000 slides in the Peter Boardman collection, which took them a year to complete!!

My favourite — and the most rewarding — part of the role revolves around community: using the collection to engage with and inspire children and adults about mountaineering heritage. This could be through exhibitions, events, talks and school activities and often utilises a combination of archive materials and museum objects. ☺

Irish Mountain Rescue

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W: rescuebenevolent.fund E: secretary@rescuebenevolent.fund

Mountain Rescue England and Wales

who?



All MREW officer email addresses end with @mountain.rescue.org.uk

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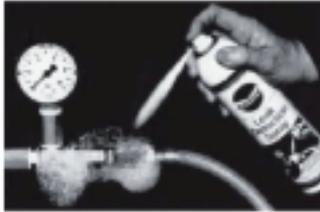
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